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ABSTRACT

A majority of those people enrolling in low-level further education courses offered through the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) lack qualifications and experience necessary to find good jobs, are disillusioned with secondary education, seldom recieve any further education, and are unemployed. To meet the needs of such students, the ILEA developed a Communications Curriculum Development Project involving workshops in various areas, including communication skills, numeracy, and vocational preparation. Particularly stressed during the project were relevance of courses to the world of work, provision of work experience, development of strategies to enable previously undermotivated students to take control of their education, and development of a skill-based rather than a knowledge-based curriculum. The following strategies are key to the ILEA program: use of multi-skills workshops, orientation towards work, provision of "vocational tasters" or career exploration opportunities, and provision of personal support. Offered by the ILEA are a variety of hybrid, linking, bridging, and special access courses in such areas as business, health, construction, arts, and retail. While the ILEA program is not without problems, it manifests a commitment to low-level further education in an urban environment and has been quite successful. (MN)

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1 reviewing the range of existing curricula and identifying overlap, duplication and deficiencies

2 determining priorities for action to improve the total provision and suggesting ways in which improvement can be effected

3 carrying out specific studies, helping with curricular experiments, and contribution to the evaluation of objectives, and

4 disseminating information about the process of curriculum development in FE.

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Jack Mansell
Director

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Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit

PROJECT REPORT

TRANSITION AND ACCESS

A Review of
low-level FE Courses
in the ILEA

Commissioned by the FEU from:
F D FLOWER

4

February 1981
(Reprinted July 1981)

Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit

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Abbreviations used in the text

ACFHE
Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education

BEC
Business Education Council

CGLI
City and Guilds of London Institute

CEE
Certificate of Extended Education

CSE
Certificate of Secondary Education

DES
Department of Education and Science

FE
Further Education

FEU
Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit

FHE
Further and Higher Education

GCE
General Certificate of Education

ILEA
Inner London Education Authority

ITB
Industrial Training Board

LEA
Local Education Authority

MSC
Manpower Services Commission

NATFHE
National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

NAHT
National Association of Head Teachers

OECD
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RSA
Royal Society of Arts

TEC
Technician Education Council

TSA or TSD
Training Services Agency, now the Training Services Division of the MSC

UVP
Unified Vocational Preparation

WEEP
Work Experience on Employer's Premises

WEP
Work Experience Programme

YOP
Youth Opportunities Programme

Preface

I was invited by the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit in December 1978 "to prepare a description of low-level Further Education in ILEA, which will

i. place it in a brief historical and social context, explain the purposes and nature of the courses, give details about the development work undertaken by teachers and advisers, and note the support offered by the Authority, and

ii. draw some conclusions about the relevance of this provision to a situation in which colleges throughout the country are being urged to develop courses for those "who may have low school attainments and less interest in the traditional forms of further education than the majority for whom colleges are accustomed to provide". (DES Circular 10/77)

The enclosed text is the result of six months of visits, interviews and dicussions and three months of distillation of that experience into a written statement. I am very conscious of its omissions and its inadequacy. Eric Sudale has called the proliferation of this field of work 'a jungle' and nowhere can the extent and lushness of that jungle be better perceived than by a quick flight over the Amazonian expanses of the ILEA provision.

I have not attempted to list and describe in detail all, or even a substantial number, of the courses provided by the different colleges. In the first place, this work has already been done to a limited extent; secondly, to undertake a reasonable catalogue would have outstripped the resources at my disposal; and finally, it is very questionable how useful such an undertaking would be.

This text needs to be read in conjunction with certain others already published; the FEU's own documents "Experience, Reflection, Learning", "A Basis for Choice", "Supporting YOP", the Garnett College Survey "Post-16 One-Year Pre-Employment Courses" and the CRC's book "A Second Chance". All these texts give examples in some detail of the types of courses mentioned in this report. To duplicate their statements seemed tedious and unnecessary.

Moreover, static descriptions of courses are often deceptive as most are in a state of flux, evolving or disintegrating and tending to move towards certain simpler and more general norms. It is not only this process that I have attempted to chart in these pages, but the thinking that is contributing to it and where possible, the origins of that thinking, its implications and possible further development.

The many cross-currents in the actual provision and the lack of fully worked-out and completed models make for a confused picture and this I have tried to clarify. In so doing, I may well have oversimplified the pattern, and omitted some important facets.

The first two chapters attempt to identify the constituency the provision is designed to serve and its social and learning characteristics. If the statements of the young people seem to be critical of their previous school experience, it must be remembered that the greater part of further education has always taken good care not to be embarrassed by their presence.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are concerned with the origins, functioning and thinking of the ILEA's Curriculum Development Project, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 with the nature of the provision and the action of the authority. The last chapter considers the implications for the future for the courses and support activities so far developed within the authority and the significance these might have for other bodies.

The school I attended in London as a boy had a stained glass window in the hall portraying Bishop Creighton—the scholar bishop of London at the turn of the century. The school adopted his motto "pasce agnos meos". London—as elsewhere—still has its hungry sheep, and the exhortation is still timely.

While ILEA officers and lecturers are identified by name as is customary, the names of students in this report have been changed to protect their anonymity.

F D Flower

CHAPTER 1

Students Speak

Section 1—Melanie

When I arrived for my interview with Melanie Gibson she was not yet back from lunch. She had left a message with reception at ground level who directed me via the fast lift to the 14th floor. There another receptionist put me to wait among the rubber plants and glossy oil trade magazines, in a deep armchair with a cup of coffee. I looked around at the restrained elegance of the office furnishing, the wall to wall carpeting and discreet lighting, and the spacious view through the windows over the roof tops to Buckingham Palace and St James Park.

I had made my appointment by 'phone and as yet had never met Melanie. As we might not recognise each other, would the receptionist please introduce us?

"You'll know Melanie as soon as you see her," said one of the more senior members of the staff coming up to the reception desk at that moment, "she is the only black girl we've got in this building."

Five minutes later Melanie was herself showing me her desk and the range of files for which as a junior librarian, she was responsible—Wells, Production, Exploration,—and telling how she came to be in her present post in the British Headquarters of a major American Oil Company.

Her career at school had not been an outstanding success. "I didn't have much qualifications," she said "but if you've got a certificate that you've been to college at least you might have a little bit of chance more than if you'd just left school."

She went to Catford branch of South East London College where she enrolled on the RSA Vocational Preparation Course.

"I enjoyed that. It was good. On the course I did English, Maths, Typing, Work Experience, Office Work and Citizenship—all sorts of different things. It was really interesting, because we all mucked in. I enjoyed it more at college than I did at school.

The course provided a spell of work experience, one day a week which she had spent in the office of Hither Green Hospital, but at the end of the year she still found it difficult to get work. It was a story one had heard many times before but she told it without malice or irony.

"I don't know why but I just found it hard to get work . . . I went to 56 interviews before I actually came to Phillips Petroleum. I joined up with all the bureaus you could think of and after a while I got fed up with them—and some of the places they sent you! — I'd never heard of them in my life. Then I started looking in papers and magazines and I'd phone up and then they'd tell me to come along and when I got there they'd say 'No sorry the job's gone etc.' I was really getting depressed being at home."

She had been in the habit of working part-time in a hairdressers while at college and she was asked to come back for the holiday. While there she met a lady who was responsible for one of the Manpower Services Commission Youth Opportunity Schemes and who suggested that Melanie should apply for a place. The careers office she went to sent her instead to one of the participating firms of the Petroleum ITB's Work Experience Scheme. Though it was not the particular scheme she had applied for Melanie was prepared to try anything. "I thought there's no harm in trying, I'll just see what happens".

I asked her if she was not just a little intimidated by the building and the palatial surroundings. "No" she replied, "in a way I was so fed up because I had been to so many interviews that I just thought to myself—well I'll just go; if I don't get the job then it's nothing strange. And I just went for the interview and she said I'd got the job. I nearly hit the roof I was really glad."

At that point, of course, she had obtained not a permanent post, that was to come later but a place on a Government training scheme, four days a week in a work place with a planned progression of training and one day each week in a College. Her certificate lists the training she has undertaken — micro-filming, photocopying, mailing, stationery, reception, switch-board and telex. The course had been designed with close cooperation between employers and training board and college and the bare day at college was designed to pick up the points brought up by the participants in discussion and to compare their experiences in different offices and to reinforce the skills they had learned and were practising in the work place.

For Melanie the discussions were useful in helping her to examine and reflect on her experience at work. She enjoyed meeting girls from the other placements but that part of the College day that dealt with matters she had already covered at Catford she found less interesting than the days at work. She had no such reservations about the residential week that rounded off the course. It took place at Plaw Hatch the Trade Union Country Club at East Grinstead. In addition to each day's programme there was a project running throughout the course. The students had to produce a news sheet to report on the week's activities. They were responsible for making decisions about how big it was to be, the lay-out, and the original writing up, whilst someone worked on sub-editing and getting it into shape. It was something they could have at the end of the week to take away and show what they had done. While at the beginning they would work on their personal assignments at their own pace and in their own way, by the end of the week they were working under pressure in order to finish before the evaluation session on the Friday when representatives of employers and the MSC visited the course.

"We did a lot of work," said Melanie, "but mainly it was an opportunity to get away from work and our parents and to find out what we were like in ourselves. I really enjoyed it. I found it helpful. We were all together. Some of the girls that were there had never left home before in their lives. It was an opportunity for them to get away from their mums and whoever they've got left behind."

Their course tutor had already spoken to me enthusiastically about the response of Melanie and her friends to the residential period during the evaluation session.

"It was lovely because spontaneously they were saying all the things you'd want them to say—about living together, about learning to cooperate with each other, and recognising their faults and being able—through the project—to recognise that there were different ways of working at things and people would work at different paces. Extremely useful comments they made."

In the last week of her placement, Melanie heard there was a vacancy and applied for it. She had her interview, still doubting the possibility of success. Two days before she was due to leave, she was offered her present post. Almost all the other young people on the Work Experience Course either obtained jobs in the firms with whom they had been placed or with other large firms. Normally only young people with some academic qualification would have been recruited but a successful spell of work experience with for example British

Petroleum, and a certificate stating what the holder can do would appear for some purposes, to be a satisfactory alternative to an 'O' level. The one exception was a boy who in the light of his experience was returning to further education to do a full time GCE course.

For Melanie the path through an ILEA vocational preparation course followed by a Youth Opportunities Work Experience scheme had been a process of reversing the major lesson taught by the secondary school and the fruitless search for a job—that she was a failure, and that there was no way in which she could achieve success. The college alone could not effect that reversal, though it laid an essential foundation. The direct experience of work had been the catalytic ingredient. The secret of her success lay in the effective combination of these two aspects of her education.

Her final comments to me were illuminating:

"When I first came here I didn't have no confidence in myself at all—I really didn't. I was so frightened, I thought 'My God, they're not going to keep me anyway.' I told my Mum 'they're going to kick me out soon.' She used to say 'Don't say that, have confidence!' and I'd come to work and try to put things in the right places. And there was a young gentleman and he said to me 'Come on, you can do it, you know you can' and I said 'I don't think I can; I don't think I'm good enough for this job.' and he said 'Stop doubting yourself. You're doing well and as the days roll on the things will just fall into place.' But first I just had to bawl out when I couldn't find anything. But they didn't mind because they knew I was new and they helped."

And again;

"Anyone who gets on one of these courses—they're lucky and they should try their best and push ahead."

Section 2—
What the Young People say

Melanie is in many respects a typical representative of that large group of young people in Britain who leave school at the end of the period of compulsory schooling having achieved little in the way of appropriate qualifications at school, who enter the labour market directly, find it difficult to obtain and to hold a job and rarely receive any further education and little or no systematic training. Melanie was more fortunate than most because thanks to the Catford Course and to Work Experience she has entered on a path not only of successful employment but of personal development. Her burgeoning self-image and her growing perception of the widening range of options available to her are the product of the education she has received since she left school.

To meet Melanie now may obscure the fact that she shares many other characteristics and problems that are more obvious among the less fortunate members of the oft-quoted figure of 300,000 untrained, unqualified and only too frequently unemployed young school leavers.[1]

Her previous experience of school—at least of secondary school—had been largely negative. In consequence, there had been some degree of alienation from the formal processes of education which her college experience had mitigated. In one sense she was clearly not a slow learner, as was proved by her success in her Work Experience placement. Yet in school she exhibited the characteristics of a slow learner and achieved little in terms of certification. In a different learning environment her learning was rapid and effective. Her immediate perspective appeared to be short-run but her barely formulated aspirations were of a different order. Her attitudes towards school, work and adults generally were ambivalent. She is also a member of an ethnic minority and although she did not herself make any kind of complaint, her 56 unsuccessful interviews suggest she has already been the victim of racial discrimination. All of these are features shared in greater or less degree with many of the young people whom I have met recently and in the past and who form part of the phalanx who lack qualification and training, seldom receive any further education and are often nowadays unemployed.[2]

It is this group of young people with whom this text is concerned. In the ILEA a jargon term "Appendix II"—whose provenance is explained below—is frequently used to cover them.[3]

One of the biggest sources of disillusionment about secondary school is the way in which curriculum choice is handled in the middle school. One rarely hears serious criticism from the relatively successful pupils who get their choices, or who make good anyway. But failure to obtain not necessarily all, but a particular subject, is often given by respondents the reason for their subsequent decline in performance and lack of interest in school.

"When I got up into the form where you make decisions," said Melanie, "I wanted to do typing and they would not let me because they wanted me to do art. I wanted to do typing. After that I began to really hate school and I couldn't wait to leave."

There is a special bitterness in some of the anecdotes that allege a breach of faith over choices. A young milkroundsman on day-release complained;

"In the third year they sold us a deal saying, right you can all choose, you can go on commerce or technical . . . different courses. Well, alright fair enough. I went on commerce but he said 'Before you go on it, you're on a six months probationary period. When you finish this six months—we can sling you out, or you can sling it in.' Anyway, after the six months was up, I got a bit cheesed off with it because I wanted to work with my hands, something like a motor mechanic. So I went up to the old man and said 'Listen, you know, I want to change.'"

" 'Oh you can't change now. You've been on it six months.'

I said 'The deal was six months and then we chucked it in or agreed on it.'

'Oh no,' he says, 'you're lumbered with that now.' "

The young people are some times baffled when they have a clear cut interest and are prevented by an apparently arbitrary decision from following it. The reasons for the decision—administrative or educational—are no doubt excellent in the view of the teacher concerned in the school, but if they are not comprehended and accepted as sound by the young people themselves the perception of the school and its hierarchy as a perverse and unreasonable institution is reinforced. Sonia Kay from South London said,

"Well, it wasn't a choice in a way, and then again it was. PE was to be compulsory and then they changed it. When we went in September, I wanted to do community care, and I couldn't do it, they wouldn't let me do it. They didn't quite say why not. They said 'It didn't fit in with your timetable and you're not to do it anyway because I don't think it's a good subject for you.' And I mean, if I'd picked it I should know what I wanted to do and (laughing) I mean, you can't argue with those people at that school."

Listening to these young people, fluent indeed on matters of relatively small consequence, but even now after a period of further education often inarticulate, even incoherent, about their more private hopes and aspirations for themselves, one can have sympathy with the head of house or whoever is responsible for trying to match up what a school with its own priorities and institutional rigidities can offer to meet the not-always-very-clear perception of a Sonia or a Melanie. They may often be clear what they do not want but their real interest and abilities are still emergent.

Nevertheless there is a persistent and widespread belief amonst some of our students that it is the children who have achieved relatively well in the first two years, who present an acceptable persona, and who have been good pupils, who get their choices. Those whose performance has been less satisfactory or who for the teachers carry some social stigma of class or race do not fare so well.[4]

Though some schools make efforts to involve the parents in this process, it is not always easy to do so. Dorothy, a black girl from Tottenham, explained;

"I had a head of house who sat down and discussed the lessons and what was involved and did I think I would like that sort of thing. You had to go home and discuss it with your parents and that. My Mum said it was really up to me, what I wanted to do, because she didn't want to put something that she knew I wasn't really interested in. I wouldn't want to learn, I'd just muck about."

To judge from the correspondence column of the quality press the system of subject choice—its scope and effectiveness—is the touchstone by which many middle class parents judge the merits of a comprehensive school. Faced with its complexity the parents of our students tend to withdraw, leaving their children to face the harsh choices of the world by themselves. It is reminiscent of Becky Sharpe who facing an equally crucial choice was aware that she had "no kind parent to organise these matters for her and that if she did not get a husband for herself, there was no-one else in the wide world who would take the trouble off her hands." But for our students, left to themselves to make the choice, the results are sometimes as predictable and disastrous as those of Becky's choice.

And yet their situation is full of paradox. Some school teachers thinking of their hard cases may be sceptical of the phenomenon identified by workers at the Tavistock Clinic as 'mourning for school'.[5] When Melanie says "I couldn't wait to leave," it is easy to take that phrase as a statement of fact, especially when as in her case, it is supported by the practice of 'bunking off'.

Denis, who had been a persistent truant, explained his situation first as a reaction against what he felt was the arbitrary use of authority by certain teachers and the practical problem of having to bring a note to explain a day's absence. He had, in consequence of being unable to bring such a note, been off for weeks at a time. And yet he had spent much of his time hanging around other schools or enjoying the social facilities of colleges of further education.

This ambivalent attitude towards school finds utterance amongst older students who have left school far behind in expressions of regret that they did not make better use of their time;[6] but in those closer to the actual experience, it manifests itself in an intense feeling that they have been let down in some way, cheated of what they ought to have had. They do not seek to disguise or to excuse their own behaviour or failure to cooperate; that they suggest is a symptom of the complaint. They should have been made to learn; good teachers would have taught them. They make paradoxical statements about their teachers not being sufficiently strict, while in the same breath comparing the school and its overall regulations and system of control to Colditz. The ferocity of some statements can perhaps only be explained by the fact that in spite of an apparent reluctance to attend regularly or to concentrate on work when present, they have a latent strong and positive attachment to an institution which despite disparagement they recognise is there to serve them. They also manifest a great anxiety about what awaits them in a world beyond school.

"You don't think about a job you know," said John, a boy who ended up on a general education course in a College of Further Education. "You're just thinking about—'Cor, I've got to get up in the morning' and when you go to school you're sitting there waiting for the time to pass. Then you come to about the last week, you think, oh smart, I leave school, you know. Then you suddenly think—*cor, I wonder—'er—what I'm gonner do?*".

Even work experience—the mere rehearsal of work but in a live context—has its anxieties for our students. Strangely enough the part-time jobs that many of them have had while at school do not seem to hold the same terrors and they are seen only exceptionally as a rehearsal for real work. It is perhaps for that reason that this widespread preliminary experience seems so little used by teachers either in schools or in colleges. The fear of failure, the lack of confidence not merely of being able to perform the necessary tasks—as Melanie indicated—but of sustaining the adult role, frequently emerges in discussions with these young people.

One of the saddest features is the apparent acceptance by so many young people of the judgment passed on them as a result of their performance in the school system. They are aware of the consequential labelling and the implications of that labelling but only a minority reject the judgments. In spite of her manifest success on her two courses and in her job Melanie was still diffident and apologetic over her academic record. A van boy in Islington could see no point in continuing schooling beyond learning to read and write.

"Well, the main thing in school is learning to read and write which I have done. If the kid himself is bright and he can go further in education—well by all means, let the kid stay on. But as for myself, if I'd stayed on it would have been a waste of time, so I left. You've got to have something inside you to make you good at one subject or even at more. But if you know you haven't got it inside you, it's just a waste of time staying on at school."

We frequently hear complaints about the unrealistic aspirations of many school leavers on entrance into GCE courses in further education, but the 'realism' of the last-quoted speaker in which he has internalised the external judgement of the school and incorporated it permanently into his image of himself is much more destructive of personality. The decision not to pursue an academic road does not necessarily imply a recognition of a lack of ability. It may simply mean a decision to deploy one's ability along a different route or in a different domain.[7]

Until Melanie was recruited along the route of a vocational preparation course followed by work experience, the firm she works for always selected, for her job and others like it, young people who had a minimum of four or five 'O' levels. Had Melanie attempted to pursue that academic path she might have succeeded in getting, at long last, the odd 'O' level or CSE qualification, but probably insufficient to get her present job. Her real abilities however are not in question. Hers is a responsible job calling for a degree of independent decision-making, quick responses and general efficiency. It also requires some understanding, albeit fairly superficial, of the workings of an industry based on a complex technology.

Some young people who have been relatively successful at school report quite differently on their school experiences and their feelings towards school. Even when they prefer the further education college and are enthusiastic about the new experience, they still like to be pleasantly nostalgic about their school experience.

Some of those that had had experience of the VIth form contrasted the changed relationship between teacher and pupil and the relative freedom to discuss issues with their teachers favourably with what had occurred in the previous years.

For such students as these, relatively confident in their aspirations and assured of themselves and the soundness of their intentions, disapproval or even being ignored on the part of their teacher could have been endured and overcome, if their confidence in themselves outweighed the evaluation of their teacher. The contrast between the attitudes and consequential success of such young people and the plight of working-class pupils or those from a socially disadvantaged background in a competitive academic situation is set out in the research of social scientists such as H T Himmelweit.[8] Most of our students appear to reflect only too accurately the findings of this body of research. they seem to accept, perhaps too readily, the evaluation of other people. The complexities of the building of the self-image have by no means been fully elucidated but we can be fairly certain that a stable self-image is an important factor in helping people to learn and to decide on their personal learning agenda.

The matter of labelling and the building of a positive self-image has a special significance for those young people in Further Education who came from ESN schools. A number of the

ILEA colleges have links with ESN schools both those for the severely handicapped and those for the moderately handicapped.

The young people from the schools for the severely retarded undoubtedly have needed the specialised regime of their schools and the kind of course now being developed in some colleges completes their education and their transition into an adult world that will make few concessions. The students from schools for the moderately retarded are another question altogether.

"Most of those who come from ESN schools certainly have lower attainment and almost invariably are slow learners", said a senior lecturer in the general education department of one college. "Very often we find by the end of the year there has been an almost complete change of personality—from youngsters who have always been dependent on being told what to do to young people who end up by being students who are very much more self reliant, making decisions for themselves and able to cope with problems that previously they would always have to refer to an adult or their parents or a teacher. And in this sense I don't think many of them are really ESN."

Their improved performance may be a reflection of the rise in IQ which is known often to take place among the mildly retarded "and it is most marked among individuals from a very deprived home background, particularly if they leave home . . . . The rise in IQ is associated with improvement in social adjustment and occurs in any reasonable environment, apparently largely as a result of removal from an environment which impedes intellectual development."[9] It may be that such students were wrongly categorised as ESN in the first place. There are three aspects to this process. First there may be grounds for the withdrawal of a child from a learning environment in which he is not achieving on a level with his peers to one—more sheltered, more supportive or in some other way more appropriate—in which he can achieve; but secondly the grounds for making such a move need to be clearly understood by all who are a party to it—the original teachers, the teachers in the new environment, the categorisers, the parents and above all the child himself. IQ alone cannot be the sole guide. A useful tool with the population it was designed for—a white middle-class population—its uncertainty as it comes to be applied in cultural contexts removed from that norm makes its use suspect in this kind of categorisation.[10] Finally the way in which the identification is tagged is an important factor, affecting the expectations of teachers, parents, children and future employers and consequently the performance of the child.[11]

This question of labelling is a highly sensitive one. To begin with, many labels are used out of context and thus appear to say things about a person which are totally unjustified. Rutter and Madge say; "although with a few important exceptions IQ and educational attainments correlate to much the same degree in all ethnic groups in Western society apparently the relationship between IQ and social competence is not the same. As a consequence individuals from social and ethnic minority groups run the risk of being labelled "mentally retarded" on the basis of IQ tests although they are functioning satisfactorily outside the school and outside the test situation. How much this matters and the way in which it matters will depend on the social consequences of the labelling."[12] The over-representation of black children in ESN schools is a major concern of the West Indian community; as is the well-established finding that while black children brought up in this country and having all their schooling here do better in our school system than those coming into the school system from overseas yet for West Indian children the mean attainment of such children is still lower than that of native born white children.[13] Some members of the black community maintain that this effect is the result of a latent racialism in the curriculum itself that manifests itself subtly in two ways. First there is an intuitive response by the young person to elements of content, to teaching approaches and unconscious but real attitudes that cause him to withhold a measure of co-operation from the learning process. To do well, even for bright, well-adjusted white middle class young people in school requires an effort of commitment, for much of what is taught in an academic curriculum relates to fairly distant goals, of not very great immediate relevance. If the immediate incentives of parental pressure, good marks, and teacher approval are diminished by an apparent affront to the young person's very identity by what is being taught compounded by a failure to recognise his expectations of how it should be taught, the result is the process which one speaker at a conference on racialism in education called "truanting in the head", that is sitting in the classroom, physically present, but having withdrawn from any real participation in the lesson.[14]

The second aspect of the process reinforces the first in that some teachers find it difficult to develop the same relationship with their black pupils as with their white ones and the teacher's expectations of his pupils may be distorted by firmly held stereotypes of which he is largely unconscious. Teachers and their professional associations may find it difficult to accept such a judgement; nevertheless young black people themselves without prompting from their elders make such statements very frequently as an expression of their own perception.

It is a position difficult to establish and to substantiate by research findings of the requisite rigour, but as a strongly-held belief among many young blacks supported by their actual experience of the education system it is not to be lightly dismissed and must be taken into account when a programme for disadvantaged adolescents such as the Appendix II provision is being devised unless that provision too is to be negated by further truanting actual or "in the head".

Tony, a black student who spoke at the student conference mentioned above, explained the process as he experienced it. Arriving in England in 1967 and going to a tough school, he found he had to maintain his position in the playground vis a vis the white boys. He had to fight as he said "to maintain his peace". Sent to the headmaster for fighting he devined from the headmaster's attitude a stereotyped belief that "the black man is violent" which in turn established a defensive attitude on the part of staff.

"It was not really a learning process. It was more—well—'You're here for a certain number of hours a day, and I'm here, so what we'll do meantime is transmit whatever we can but maintain our distances.' A learning process should be one where a relationship is established. And a relationship can't be established where people are keeping their distances."

This experience of young blacks would seem to be a more intense form of an experience that other young people estranged from the cultural norms of the teachers have gone through.[15] It is a commonplace of initial teacher training in class control to establish that there is a tendency for teachers to focus their attention on particular children. Those children respond best to whom the teacher responds best. Teachers are taught to broaden their focus to include the whole class. How effectively some teachers manage this in practice is questionable. It is not only young blacks who truant in the head, or feel that a distance has been established between themselves and the teacher that in the case of other pupils is substantially diminished.

A white boy working in a warehouse reflected ruefully on his school experience: "Some schools, you know, get these bright kids. The ones that aren't bright, the teachers just leave 'em there and they teach the bright ones and they just leave you at the back there . . . They forget you are there, think you don't want to get on. They just leave you and go on with the good ones . . . 'Do this; oh you're getting good!' keep on to the same ones every day".

His mate confirmed this picture from his own experience.

"Unless you're really

bright—teacher's pet, sharpen his pencil or do something like that for him . . . Otherwise as far as you're concerned they simply tell you the lesson whatever it consists of, and you've got to sit there and take it all in and they think 'Well that's it; next class;' and they've finished".

These students display remarkably little resentment partly because they are realists and accept the situation that confronts them. They can often appreciate the extremely difficult task that faces a teacher. They appreciate the constraints under which he works and at last come to recognise that the forms of activity that the normal pattern of the school day and its timetable and curriculum impose upon the teacher cannot relate very closely to their own perceived needs because of the conditions under which teacher and pupil encounter each other.

CHAPTER 2

A New Start in ILEA

1. An Alternative Recipe for Learning

The young people just quoted are all drawn from a population that while clearly recognisable to teachers in schools and further education is nonetheless heterogeneous in almost every respect. It is diverse in its origin, in its ethnic and social class composition and its range of experience. Certain social groups may be over represented in it when compared to their distribution in the overall population but rarely will a single factor account for their membership of it. What its members have in common, negatively, is a record of failure or at least of under-achievement during their school career and positively, an ability to learn when they find themselves in the right (for them) learning environment.

Transformations can be dramatic. A girl who had been allowed to stay on into the Sixth Form–somewhat reluctantly by the school—joined a City & Guilds Foundation Course in Community Care and was completely changed as a result of her work experience in an Old People's Home. The Matron's appreciation—"this is the best person we've had in terms of attitude to work and relations with people in the home—led to increased motivation, a reasonable performance on the course and an offer of employment. Those responsible for Unified Vocational Preparation Schemes report similar experiences.

There are surprising cases of persistent truants who nevertheless settle not only to a job but a course of study. Denis whom we met in the last chapter had as part of his course done a fortnight's work experience with one borough council and landed a job with day release as an apprentice plumber with another borough council. His irregular school attendance must have impaired his attainment but not to the extent that he was unable to accept the job and begin the course.

The personnel officer of a major electronics firm reported at a conference on an applicant for a post who had come through with a CSE ungraded in mathematics who took their general mathematics entrance paper and came top. Another employer told me:

"We've got in our office now a very bright young man of the age of 20 who has only got CSEs 3, 4 and 5 because he didn't do his homework, he didn't swot up for his exams. There's no way today you'd see him as a CSE 3, 4 or 5 chap—in the way one might interpret that level of achievement. I'd put his potential certainly as administrative officer, although his formal achievement wouldn't indicate that."

The four examples by themselves do not and could not establish any kind of case against the present curriculum in schools and colleges or the present examination system. They do illustrate strands within the web of this under-achieving population which, because of its diversity, may most helpfully be identified as a body of people that exhibit certain common features in their learning pattern. By concentrating on the learning characteristics and devising strategies to meet them, a college or an education authority may be able to make a limited contribution. It will not be tackling the root causes of any of the problems of social disadvantage which lie within the inner fabric of our society and about which a single college, or a single local authority can do little. By adopting a limited strategy an institution may be able to give substantial help to individuals and to groups to confront and to cope with their individual difficulties, while at the same time throwing ever more light on the nature of the underlying problems. This pragmatic approach widely adopted in the ILEA provision reinforces what has been well-established for a long time by educational research and practice namely that students of this type will tend to perform more effectively if they are working within a firmly defined framework, responding to teachers within a relation of mutual trust and respect on courses of an integrated character that have clear objectives relating to ends that the students accept as relevant to their lives and situation, in which there is a substantial amount of practical activity (not necessarily involving manipulative skills) and which are consistent with an overall strategy of limited objectives—a series of clear immediate goals, leading to a more distant, less well-defined but nevertheless real and attainable goal.[1] It may be argued—and in a period of contracting resources it will certainly be argued—that if such young people have failed to profit from the education so far provided for them, an education authority has no responsibility for making further provision in the period after they leave school.

In spite of the apparent logic, central government—under the direction of both major political parties—has taken a different view. Not only the rising levels of unemployment of young people affecting all western industrialised countries, but the necessity of developing latent abilities and skills to cope with the problems presented by new technologies and new patterns of industrial and commercial employment, have led to a growing concern with the education and training of the 16–19 year age group.

In this situation, the London experience is instructive. In the initial stages, there was organic growth in certain colleges or departments in response to local demand. For many years now—at least two decades—courses have been provided for students of low educational attainment in London. Some of these students found themselves in the colleges because day-release education was a condition of their work; others were on general education courses, some nominally GCE 'O' level courses, others of the type we should now call "pre-employment courses". While the authority had supported these developments in a general fashion—in that it did not move to stop them—they were not given any precise level of priority nor were they singled out for special encouragement.

During this last decade the ILEA has as a matter of deliberate policy encouraged the expansion by Colleges of the provision of low-level courses. Some of this work has tended to be associated with GCE provision and is seen as supplementing it or preparing for it. Some of it relates to the established vocational courses but much of it consists of quite new elements or totally new courses. What is perhaps unusual is that the ILEA's action represents an unequivocal commitment on its part to the support of a body of work that had existed primarily on the initiative of individual colleges or departments. Its consequential intervention into issues of curriculum policy and development that are normally the concern of the individual college is unique and warrants closer inspection.

Section 2—What is Appendix II?

The body of work with which this text is concerned is covered by the generic—and jargon—term "Appendix II". It is a term that baffles many from outside the capital, but it is almost unavoidable in discussing current developments in low-level work in further education in London.

ILEA's policy towards low-level work became explicit as a result of a series of mergers between London's Area Colleges and the local Colleges for Further Education that took place during 1973 to 1974. At the beginning of the 1970's there were in the ILEA twenty-one maintained technical and commercial colleges and schools of art, three general and commercial colleges and thirteen colleges for further education. The first category were technical or commercial colleges with a broad spectrum of courses, including some advanced work. The colleges for further education, all local colleges, had grown out of the old day colleges or the junior technical and commercial colleges which were evening institutes and their ceiling of work was—or was supposed to be—GCE 'O' level or its equivalents. But these colleges included not only GCE work but the General courses in engineering and science, the first two years of City and Guilds telecommunications courses, craft courses in engineering, hairdressing courses, secretarial and copy typing courses, nursery nurse and pre-nursing courses, and a growing volume of general education courses for those who had not done well at school but were not yet ready for work. Some of the area colleges, that is, the technical and commercial colleges undertook some of the craft work and some of the CFE's had already pierced that 'O' level ceiling and were offering 'A' level other courses above the 'O' level standard. This arbitary division of work—the result of an historical process that had made sense in its day—now seemed illogical and the need for closer contact between colleges at the two levels to ensure continuity to be established led to a reappraisal of London's further education system.[2]

For teachers in CFE's there was an additional practical incentive to change. Though the volumes of work in these colleges was large and the numbers of staff quite high, because of the structure of the Burnham scale and its link with levels of work, the insistence on a ceiling of 'O' level work meant a restriction on the number of senior posts available at senior lecturer or even at lecturer II level. For teachers this was a limitation on the possibility of their promotion and their long-term career prospects. For the college it imposed a limit on the ability to create an adequate number of administrative posts to supervise the substantial volume of work. The authority, though always prepared to give a generous interpretation to Burnham, had not always found it easy in the past to devise formulae which while remaining within the spirit of Burnham correctly reflected the realities of the work undertaken by the colleges. In 1970 and '71 a review was undertaken of ILEA's further and higher education and the members of the review working party, in the light of the authority's commitment to the comprehensive principle at secondary level, sought for an all-through solution to the problem presented by the existing colleges. They were anxious that status should not be granted solely to institutions catering for more advanced students and thereby withheld from colleges meeting the needs of students with a lower level of aspiration or a lower level of achievement. The review when published was endorsed by the Education Officer and accepted by the authority and led to the reorganisation of the existing 37 colleges into 15 Colleges of Further and Higher Education and 8 Specialist and Art Colleges. Most of the new Colleges of Further and Higher Education were larger institutions composed of several smaller colleges merged into a single new college.[3]

What was to prove one of the most important sections of the Review was not included in the main text at all but appeared as an Appendix. The review working party followed three guiding principles in its work which are stated as follows; "(a) That the present division by levels of work between local colleges and area colleges should be abandoned and that colleges should as far as practicable offer courses which are 'all through' in the sense of proceeding from the lowest level appropriate to a particular discipline up to the highest level practicable in the light of provision made in the polytechnics and universities; (b) that wherever possible colleges should be organised on multi-discipline lines; (c) that the special concern for the needs of the younger, less able, less advanced students should be preserved in any reorganisation and that particular consideration should be given to the small number of colleges which specialise in providing courses for a particular industry."[4]

No one at the beginning fully comprehended the potential scope or even the real nature of the process which the inclusion of the Appendix to the report and its acceptance by the authority was to set in train. What began as a policy of safeguarding some existing courses of low status in a few colleges has blossomed into a major, well-co-ordinated policy across the authority of supporting present work and promoting new developments.

A principal who was on the original working party explained how the Appendix came into existence:

"I was, of course, a member of the working party and we had quite a job to get Appendix II. We operated on the basis of reports which were produced for the working party either by officers or by inspectors. Mostly it was a matter of taking a field of work like business studies or engineering and working out what rationalisation if any was needed. The GCE report we referred back twice, and one of the things we said to the Inspectors was that general education was not in fact getting a proper look. We were working on the assumption that general education in operational terms either meant GCE courses or general studies for technical and commercial courses. This is way back in 1971/72 and of course thinking has moved a great deal since then. But I was particularly concerned having newly arrived in the Autumn of 1972 at my college to find some very valuable courses of general education—full time—for people of very limited previous achievement which no stretch of the imagination could be described as "General studies in a vocational context" or were within a million miles of being GCE courses. And it was really from members of the working party pointing out that sort of course existed that what went into print as Appendix II—"The field of Work Study No III"—appeared. Although even then the curious hybrid origins became obvious in that the Appendix did seek to deal in the same paper with general studies—general education for vocational courses—and full-time courses in their own right".

The full text of Appendix II is given in an annex to this chapter. A careful reading of the test reveals its "hybrid" character but the ambiguity that resulted has permitted a variable interpretation that has been exploited in the colleges and subsequently by the ILEA Curriculum Development Project to promote innovation in the form and content of courses.

The simple if ambiguous description of a category of students as "the younger, less-able, and less-advanced students" has necessarily had to give way to more sophisticated formulations.

Writing in 1973 the Inspector primarily concerned with this work was able to say: "Students covered by the Appendix II remit will be those who predominate on a course of general or vocational education providing for young people whose previous educational achievements would not (at the point of enrolment) make them acceptable candidates for courses leading to conventional academic examinations (eg 'O' level) or to a number of conventional or vocational examinations at 'O' level equivalent; or who are likely to benefit from pre-vocational studies of various kinds (particularly vocationally diagnostic and work preparation courses, including those sponsored by the Training Services Agency); or who require a period of preliminary study prior to entering established academic or vocational courses.

"In addition it is acknowledged that most students on first-year City & Guilds craft courses and on Certificate in Office Studies courses (BEC—General level) and numbers of students on TEC level I and GCE 'O' level courses are likely to benefit from specific support which can be made available through a College's Appendix II provision particularly in the field of communication and numeracy skills.

"The Appendix II field is, of course, concerned with students with recognisable physical, mental or emotional handicaps, whose particular educational and other needs remain, however, the professional responsibility of the authority's teachers and inspectors designated for that purpose. In some instances Appendix II provisions have been extended to cover foundation studies for students preparing themselves for more advanced courses. Although the bulk of Appendix II provision will thus be seen to concern itself with young people in the 16–19 age range, some work with the handicapped and the students recruited to TSD preparatory courses fall outside this age bracket."[5]

This statement is helpful in that while broad it does not seek to be definitive, recognising the organic nature of the work and the way provision is developing to meet the growing demand as it reveals itself.

It identifies six major areas of concern without unduly restricting any further possibilities. The first three are various kinds of preliminary courses:

i. General or vocational education for those young people not acceptable for convential academic or vocational courses;
ii. Those requiring pre-vocational, that is, diagnostic or work preparatory courses; and
iii. Those who need a period of preliminary study, before entering an established course.

Students in the first category will all be aged 16–19, but the second two categories may include groups of older students. These three groups of students—here distinguished—have often in the past been lumped together. If accepted into a college they have either been placed on a GCE or other established course and allowed to flounder or alternatively taken into a watered down but otherwise unchanged version of such a course, masquerading as a "first year"—its very dilution of content debilitating its power to motivate. Treated in this way, without recognition of their special needs and without other support, most of such students have tended to drop out before the end of the year or to leave on its completion without proceeding further.

iv. Part-time students selected primarily by an employer, not by the college, enrolled on CGLI course or the lowest level of the TEC or BEC schemes require substantial support in the reinforcement of their basic skills if they are to succeed on these courses. Such students may also appear on 'O' level courses full or part-time;
v. Handicapped students—of all kinds; and
vi. An important and emergent group of students almost entirely falling outside the 16–19 age group, are those on what are often referred to as "special access" courses—courses for students entering higher education without the formal GCE requirements.

Each college is free to make its own interpretation on what constitutes for it the range of opportunity presented by Appendix II and ILEA colleges have tended to do this in the light of their own dominating tradition. Thus one college, with very little advanced work, that was spared the experience of merging with another college, will find the majority of its courses and activities falling within this bracket. Other colleges in order to ensure a proper balance in the distribution of resources and to safeguard the position of this work in competition with more advanced levels of work will need to clarify their policy. The academic board of a College with a good record in this field but which also had a substantial volume of more advanced work produced the following interpretation of what it meant by "Appendix II students:"

"APPENDIX II PROVISION

"1. We would ask the committee to accept for the purpose of this College, a definition of Appendix II students as being those students who for a variety of reasons have failed to achieve their potential and who may need a specialised provision to enable them to do this.

"2. We could anticipate that such students might come from a background which had some of the following characteristics;

a. Socially deprived areas and schools.
b. Families or substitute families in which there are damaging tensions and/or attitudes which conflicted with those of the school.
c. A pattern of disrupted education because of illness, travel or late arrival in the educational system.
d. A restricted, incomplete or unsatisfactory schooling, such as "home tuition", in a special school or in an inadequate school in the private sector.

"3. We would anticipate that the students themselves may have some of the following characteristics:

a. They would have left school at the earliest opportunity and have some record of truancy.
b. They would have learning problems and a lack of basic skills.
c. They would have some behavioural problems with the college situation.
d. They would have multiplicity of social and personal problems which could impede learning.
e. They would be ill-prepared to start work.

"4. We would anticipate that within this college you would find some students of this type on the following courses:

a. General education courses for full-time and part-time students including 'O' level, "Which Job", general education, reception courses.
b. Low-level vocational courses.
c. Link courses.
d. Community-based courses."[6]

Heads of general education departments with whom I discussed the nature of the Appendix II population agreed its membership is largely drawn from among the following groups. The first is the alienated, by whom they mean those who have made the wrong educational choices or who have been prevented from making choices, or those who for one reason or another have largely rejected the school system, who have actually truanted, or, though physically present in school, have withdrawn their cooperation.

The second source of Appendix II students in their view, is the socially disadvantaged, those who suffer from the effects of poverty, family disruption, schooling interrupted by poor health or family reasons. A third group is the mentally and physically handicapped while a fourth source is members of ethnic minorities who have had difficulties of culture and language and suffer from a lack of confidence in themselves and of confidence in the willingness of the ambient white society to accept them.

Belonging to one of these constituencies does not of itself guarantee a poor record of academic attainment. Examples can be quoted of students from all of them who achieve well at school and in higher education. The research literature would confirm that the educational performance of students from these social groups is more likely to be impaired than that of the normal white majority of middle-class and upper working-class students. It would also indicate that parental social class was the variable that showed the strongest association with scholastic attainment.[7]

APPENDIX II

Field of Work Study No. 3 General (Non-Vocational) Studies*

1 The Working Party have been looking at the present and possible future provision for work which, for want of a better title, has been called General Studies in this paper. It is essentially the field of work with which we are concerned in considering one of the major principles of the Review, i.e., that the special concern for the needs of the younger, less able and less advanced students should be preserved in any re-organisation. This principle was, of course, emphasised strongly by many governing bodies and academic boards and has been accepted by the Authority. As a field of work it is difficult to define exactly and the terms 'general studies', 'liberal studies', 'general education', 'vocational and 'non-vocational' all have limitations when applied to it.

2 The Working Party have been considering two main aspects of this field, in both of which they foresee a need to continue and develop a special concern for the younger and less able and less advanced students. The first of these concerns the general studies content of operative, craft and technician courses (and their counterparts in non-technical fields) which lead to specific qualifications and are offered widely in technical and commercial colleges, CFE's and some Specialist Colleges. The majority are part-time courses but there are full-time courses as well. The kind of provision needed for general and liberal studies within such courses varies considerably but among these courses, and more especially at the lower levels, there are students who are in need of a special attention to general education, particularly in the area of communication and numeracy, which goes beyond what is normally thought of in the term 'liberal studies'. There are indications that the problem may be significant and that special attention to it should continue and be developed wherever needs are identified.

3 The second area is the work which is particularly associated with CFE's, i.e., the provision of courses which are often called general education courses and do not have any examination aim. These courses may include occasional students who are preparing for an examination but they are distinguished here from courses leading to a specific qualification such as G.C.E. Some may be wholly general education and some may include a vocational ingredient, even if only of a 'sampling' nature. Some colleges provide day release courses for particular employers and others offer courses for particular groups, e.g., immigrants or the handicapped. The broad heading of general education disguises, however, the variety of ways in which the colleges are experimenting to establish the needs of disadvantaged students and to find the best method of catering for them.

4 The Working Party have considered whether there are any guides to the future demand for courses of the kind described in paragraph 3, arising from such factors as Raising of the School Leaving Age, immigration and the employment situation. There appear to be no definite trends but the Working Party are convinced that there are wider needs to be met within the communities which colleges serve and there should be every encouragement to cater for them as far as possible. It is expected that the new 'all-through' multi-discipline colleges which may emerge from the Review will have some of the specific general education work described in paragraph 3 together probably with special needs of the kind mentioned at the end of paragraph 2 to be met as part of the supporting general studies-provision. Specialist colleges may also have students with needs similar to those outlined in paragraph 2.

5 The effective development of this work will need special attention. Time is needed for curriculum development, personal tutoring may be desirable, some courses may involve particular administrative difficulties and a need for development of in-service training for this work is foreseen. Full-time courses of the kind described in paragraph 3 are likely to present special difficulties. Colleges will be aware of the role of the schools and of the need for consultation with them but it is clear that for a variety of reasons there will be groups of students of 16+ for whom a full-time 'general education' course in an FE college is the best provision. The total numbers in full-time courses of this kind are comparatively limited at present (about 300 students) but it is expected that the number of centres will grow as needs are identified and experienced staff become available. The courses do, however, need very careful planning of content and of objectives and in approving new courses priority should be given to schemes which are well designed in this sense.

6 A number of suggestions have been made for ensuring that the kind of work described is continued and extended and to avoid any tendency that there might be for it to suffer if there is pressure on accommodation or staffing at a college. These include the possibility of a Vice-Principal having special responsibility for the care and development of this work, backed perhaps by a Standing Committee of Governors and/or a special sub-committee of the Academic Board. These suggestions should be examined in the light of circumstances at particular colleges but the best insurance is, of course, a ready acceptance by everyone at a college of the importance of the work and a concern for the needs of those who do not at present attend school or college at all.

Colleges will need an appropriate staffing ratio taking into account the nature of the work which they undertake in this field and providing where applicable for its needs in terms of curriculum development, personal tutoring and academic administration. An appropriate staffing structure in terms of grading of posts will also be desirable in order to provide effectively for the academic supervision, organisation and development of this work.

7 It is not suggested that every new college would or could be in a position immediately to appoint a specialist teaching staff covering all aspects in subject terms of the whole field of remedial and general education envisaged in this paper. Nevertheless it is envisaged that all will have appropriate staffing devoted to the continuing development of the college liberal and general studies programmes appropriate to the vocational course programmes appropriate to the vocation course provision. It is suggested that a wise staffing policy in connection with the latter work can be of assistance in enabling the gradual development of provision within the college for the type of special general education envisaged in the paper and enabling it, as the work develops, to meet the needs of the various communities which the college seeks to serve.

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*For the purposes of this report, these include supporting general studies in vocational courses and specific courses of general education.

CHAPTER 3

The ILEA Communications Curriculum Development Project

Section 1—The Project and Appendix II

With the appointment of three advisory teachers to work to the Staff Inspector responsible at the time for "general studies as part of vocational courses", in the local colleges for further education in September 1973, the ILEA Communications Curriculum Development Project sprang into life like Pallas Athene fully armed from the head of Zeus. The birth had been preceded by a long period of travail—a battle of ideas over a period of two years which was itself the outcome of a much longer period of contentious activity.

For many teachers in the colleges the activities associated with the Project have come to be identified with the words Appendix II. Low-level courses on which they may teach or for which their department is responsible are often not seen as part of Appendix II unless there has been a need to consult the Curriculum Development Project on some aspect of the work. The narrow definition of Appendix II and the work of the Project has on a number of occasions led to the failure of colleges to make use of the expertise built up in the project team in developing new courses or where members of the Project have offered advice, it has been interpreted as interference.

Nevertheless for some teachers the work of the Project is central to the implementation and elaboration of the authority's policy. This is particularly true in colleges where there has been no long tradition of low-level work and, therefore, little experience within the college to draw upon. In such cases the inter-action of the members of the central advisory team and innovatory teachers or those wishing to innovate is developing a coherent approach to an apparently diverse pattern of courses that the previous Chapter has to some extent hinted at.

There are on the other hand some teachers or departments who have a long history of work with the same constituency of students. Their experience had led them to place rather different emphasis on their work or to construct courses based on different curriculum models. They would perceive the role of the Project and its advisory teachers in a much more limited way and use its facilities and expertise for more specific and limited purposes.

There are yet others who believe that curriculum development to be effective must be rooted in the individual college and derive primarily from the teachers' own experience. Some teachers tend to hold a much more critical view of the Project's activities and its intervention in the colleges and to resist what they see as the imposition of a stereotype from above. Ironically enough, their work may still be crucially influenced by the thinking of the Project but mediated through its successful application in other colleges.

The ILEA Curriculum Development Project is a function of the ILEA's Further Education Inspectorate. Two members of the Inspectorate are associated with the Project; a staff inspector who has an overall responsibility for the sixteen-to-nineteen age group and departments of general education in all FHE colleges and a district inspector with a special responsibility for development and work in numeracy and basic science, courses for the young unemployed and a general responsibility for the development of provision for handicapped in FHE, both working in conjunction with the special education inspectorate (who are largely concerned with pupils in the statutory range). Both inspectors have the normal responsibilities of college inspectors to two major institutions each, the running of in-service courses and participating as representatives of the authority on committees of the DES, examining boards and other bodies.

The three advisory teachers established in 1973 have expanded into eight—one of whom, a Senior Lecturer, gives half his time to the Project. The original three worked closely together and at the begining had little differentiation of role. In the beginning the Project's activity was relatively restricted. By contrast the present eight teachers have much more clearly defined fields of interest though they work very much as a team. Three of them are primarily associated in a broad fashion with communication, two (including the fractional appointment) with numeracy, one with basic science and the other two with programmes rather than subject areas, programmes requiring collaboration with other groups—the Youth Opportunities Programme, (Collaborating with the MSC/TSD) and the so-called Bridging Programme, (link courses with schools). The original advisory teachers were all Senior Lecturers. The present team consists of four and a half Senior Lecturers, one Lecturer Grade II, one Lecturer Grade I and one seconded from the school sector on Burnham Schools Scale IV.

The first appointments were all established posts but more recent developments suggest that a policy of secondment of suitable staff from colleges for limited periods may be preferable, both for the Project and for individual teachers. This matter is being periodically studied in a pragmatic fashion. So many factors, educational, personal, and economic, some quite irrelevant to the purposes of the Project, impinge on the nature of an appropriate form of appointment that it becomes impossible to be dogmatic about its most desirable form.

The Project was originally housed in the Bunhill Row Buildings of City and East London College from whose practice it derived much of its initial impetus and inspiration and at that time it used the Isledon Teachers centre in Holloway as a base for its workshops and in-service work. "Isledon" became the catch-name for the teachers' workshop, held every Tuesday until 1978 in the Teachers Centre, and has such potency that it is still used by principals and others to denote the in-service training activity now taking place at the Project's headquarters in Battersea. In 1976 came a move for two years to Vauxhall College but since September 1978 the Project has been housed in a suite at the Battersea Park Branch of Westminster College. The suite consists of a largish office in which each of the advisory teachers has a desk and filing cabinets. This office accommodates the clerical staff of three Clerical Officers.

There are two moderately sized similar rooms flexibly furnished for use as "workshops" or for discussion and a smaller room containing various pieces of reprographic equipment. The progression from site to site has matched the growth of the Project not only in its personnel but also in its scope and purpose. After its first year in Battersea the Project would seem to have reached a turning point and is reviewing its progress and considering in what direction it should now move.

Already other members of the Inspectorate are becoming more closely involved in its work. The Bridging Courses require one of the schools inspectorate to be responsible for the schools' aspects of those courses. The overlap with the field of Business Studies in the RSA *Vocational Preparation Course* and the *Basic Clerical*

Procedures Course and in many colleges the BEC *General Course*, is leading to closer collaboration with the Business Studies Inspectorate. Advisory teachers seconded to the Business Education Inspectorate occupy other accommodation at Westminster College and there are frequent consultations. Especially close contacts are maintained with the FHE Inspector for Construction Technology (there are weekly in-service training sessions for numeracy and science on construction craft courses). In addition the Project in the session 1979/80 accommodated a teacher seconded to the Home Economics Inspectorate engaged on a survey of the existing Home Economics and Catering Provisions of the sixteen-to-nineteen age group in the authority.

Section 2—From English to Communication, from Communication to Curriculum

a. The Preliminary Stage

The preliminary phase of the project consisted of a series of regular meetings through 1971–72 of an ad-hoc largely self-selected group of teachers mainly of English and General Studies, but with the addition of a few technical and business studies teachers. They met under the aegis of the inspector responsible for General Studies in the colleges for further education.

At the end of a long debate about the teaching of general studies to craft level students they had identified a problem in these terms:

"The students who were being considered seemed to be disadvantaged in that their previous experiences, including possibly their schools, might have been culturally or socially fairly negative, as a result of which growth of their spoken and written language often appeared to have been inhibited."[1]

Intensive teaching would be needed if very much were to be achieved in the thirty or so periods of one or two hours available on the standard pattern of day-release course for this work. What should this teaching consist of? "Much general studies teaching in the commonly accepted sense might well be a luxury which further education could ill-afford, while powers of written, and in many case oral, communication remained under-developed."[2]

Starting with this fairly modest statement and apparently simple aim they commissioned a piece of research from the ILEA Research and Statistics Group who carried out a series of tests on a sample of students defined as "mainly indigenous, low-level, part-time, occasional students". The results of the survey were surprising and were summarised as follows:

"nearly two-fifths of the students tested were reading at an average plus level, one-third at average minus, one-quarter were graded backward and a small percentage were semi-literate."

"The most noticeable feature of the results was the range of scores rather than their levels. The very wide ability range in large numbers of classes (including some with both "superior" and "semi-literate" reading levels) may be assumed to pose serious teaching problems."

"Results from a sample of non-vocational students who were additionally tested, showed little variation from the results achieved with vocational students."[3]

Teachers of craft classes are well acquainted with the symptoms. They may be surprised at the diagnosis of the cause. Aware of the difficulties they encounter in teaching those groups they may still find it difficult to appreciate just how wide a spread of attainment and ability is represented in their classes.

The Group assessed the evidence of the survey and their own experience and looked at the initiatives undertaken in a number of colleges. Increasingly they became concerned with the teaching of language with these students rather than with the wider question of general studies. At first the Group had adhered to two main approaches, a "content to skills approach" where the material taught was given priority but where it and the way it was taught were checked to ensure an adequate coverage of language skills, the second a "skills to content" approach which, when the language skills to be taught had been determined, viable lessons were then built up.

In the light of subsequent experience one of the Advisory Teachers later appointed has dismissed this original formulation as "banal". But at least the ad-hoc group turned 'content' and 'skills' back to front in the minds of quite a number of general studies teachers dealing with craft students.

A report that included the results of the ILEA Research and Statistics Group's Survey was presented to the ILEA in 1972. It recommended that 3 lecturers should be seconded to support Curriculum Development in English and General Studies.

This recommendation was accepted by the Authority and in September 1973 the ILEA Curriculum Development Project for communication skills was established with its first three seconded teachers all newly promoted to Senior Lecturer. The preliminary phase that led up to these appointments is of crucial significance in understanding the nature of the Project and its mode of working. It represented a genuine grass-roots movement away from what teachers involved saw as a set of ineffectual activities being carried out with excellent intentions but with no real results by general studies teachers on craft courses. The Project started from teachers in the colleges and in spite of an inevitable degree of institutionalisation when the Project was formally established under a Staff Inspector, it has attempted to sustain its initial dynamic by a continuous process of reference back to the grass-roots.

Since September 1973 the Project has passed through at least three major phases. The initial phase concentrated on the limited objectives recommended by the ad-hoc Curriculum Development Group associated with developing the teaching of communication skills on part-time day-release courses. The second phase arose naturally out of the first as a result of pressure from teachers and colleges looking for help with full-time general education courses expanding under the influence of Appendix II. The third phase has been confirmed by the move to Battersea, the incorporation of a brief for numeracy and low-level science and the expansion of the group of advisory teachers to eight. This latter period has been marked by close collaboration with the MSC/TSD and the Project is still in the process of coming to terms with its possible implications.

Teachers in the colleges perceive the Project as an essentially unified body with a coherent and consistent point of view on curriculum which they present didactically—some would say dogmatically. The present team of advisory teachers do not at all see themselves in the same way, do not believe they have anything like the uniformity of standpoint or unity of view with which they are credited by those observing from without. They have certainly a common sympathy and a degree of common understanding which enables them to work effectively together but there are important differences of emphasis which are significant for them, even though those outside may not always perceive distinctions.

b. The First Phase

The first phase of the Project that lasted roughly from September 1973 to Spring 1975 concentrated almost entirely on the original brief that had been thrown up by the preliminary study. Not only did the institution of the Project chime with the publication of the Review and its Appendix II but also with the beginning of work in what was to be a three-year pilot scheme in co-operation with the City and Guilds of London Institute as the precursor to its later *Communications Course* No 772.

The work of the preliminary study was followed up and the following features of inadequacy were noted:

"i. The students found written work difficult and often tried to avoid it;

ii. The students were often unable to gain information by means of reading;

iii. The students did not readily gain information or understanding by means of listening to their craft teachers;

iv. The students did not use their speaking skills to explain or discuss elements of their craft learning;

v. Students found calculation difficult."[4]

It is perhaps worth noting that these features were descriptive of an actual situation students found themselves in. There was no attempt to assign responsibility for "inadequacy" to the students, their teachers, or the wider society. The first limited steps were to help students achieve the immediate objectives their presence on a craft course indicated that they had selected.

The team of advisory teachers accepted the analysis the original group had made of the language skills required by craft students. The analysis took account of three sets of demands, of the course the student was following, of the job he was doing and of those situations which might be expected to arise "within which he would intersect as a private individual with public and official business."[5] This line of thinking produced the formula—the student as student, the student as worker, the student as citizen, which is still the motto of the CGLI Course No. 772.[6]

There is a close family connection between this formula and the pattern of wartime education in the army that developed during the winter of 1941 and became afterwards the standard for the rest of the war. This pattern conceived of the education scheme as catering for three aspects of its clients—man as soldier, man as a citizen, man as an individual. The suggestion that general studies in further education might be organised on a similar pattern had already been made in the late fifties and early sixties in the educational press.

This is not to suggest that the Project concept was directly derived from army education or any other source but such convergence of thinking suggests that some such perspective that sees the subject of education as training in the round is likely to be an effective framework. In elaborating the content and teaching strategies, all three elements had to be taken into account. Critics of the work of the Project, who saw the emphasis on the communication skills only as a retreat from general studies and a reduction of what had previously been available, failed to see or to accept that the teaching of skills was advocated within a personal and social frame—a context that held meaning for the student and gave meaning to the activity that he undertook.

"Priority was attached to survival on the course of the substantial number of students whose skills were inadequate, or nearly inadequate, or inadequate in certain respects. This meant that the *curriculum development* emphasis (though not necessarily the *teaching* emphasis) was on the student as student."[7]

The Project had to identify appropriate learning strategies, develop suitable learning materials and to extend and to share the expertise of the advisory teachers, those associated with the original investigation and others who might be drawn into the work. A suitable model had to be identified as the basis of this work. One college had already begun to offer expert remedial help on a one-to-one basis to meet the problem of "dyslexia" and of functional illiteracy. But whatever the values of this model for the subject whose needs it met, it was neither practicable nor even desirable to make that kind of provision to meet the needs of lower-attaining, less-advanced students.

"They were too numerous and too typical of London students for anything like an "exceptional" approach to provide the answer. What was wanted was a flexible learning environment within which the students could follow individually adapted programmes of independent learning, setting their own pace and within which the needs of students at various levels of attainment and ability would be met."[8] Such an approach was already being developed in another of the local colleges of further education in the form of a communications workshop.

Materials for use in such a workshop barely existed and certainly were not being commonly produced. Thus one of the first activities of the Project was to gather such material as had already been produced by individual teachers for use on craft courses for examination, elaboration and extension and by mobilizing teacher expertise to devise new and improved materials and modes of presentation. During this phase of work the advisory teachers spent four days of the week either visiting colleges seeing what was being done and identifying what further needed to be done or at their base in City College elaborating possible responses to the problem presented to them. Every Tuesday was a day of exploration and invention at the Isledon Centre.

The advisory teachers saw themselves "working *with* (but not *for*) teachers in the production of communications skills materials", and Tuesdays at Isledon was the forum in which this sharing of expertise and materials took place. These activities were disseminated and extended through short residential in-service courses at Stoke D'Abernon and a longer course at the end of the summer term held first at Rachel Macmillan College and more recently at Dartford College. These in-service courses which attracted a limited number of technical and commercial teachers as well as those engaged in general studies provided occasions for "analysis of requirements, diagnosis of difficulties of course design; developmental theory and practice with regard to reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy."[9]

Less than twenty people had attended the meetings of the ad hoc Curriculum Development Group in 1971/2; during the session 1973/4 over a hundred and fifty people were involved at Isledon or on in-service courses.

Isledon helped to create a considerable camaraderie among its frequenters—and many teachers in the colleges still look back with nostalgia to that period. It was important to establish a core of teachers who shared in broad essentials at least a common approach to problems of communication and later more generally of curriculum. At first the investment of time was more lavish than at present and subsequent practice has been to restrict the amount of "relaxation" time from classroom duties by the colleges. But in those days the sense of sharing one's experience or inexperience, of being in the van of educational activity in the authority, was an intoxicating activity.

"There were certain regulars who turned up—perhaps too often," said an advisory teacher. "I think we sometimes worried that people came every Tuesday for a whole year. Sometimes the activity was very productive indeed but at other times people came really to pick up the latest news. They knew it was a kind of grapevine and they came and chatted and it had the effect of building up a cross college net work of Appendix II teachers. But it was not a very wide network and they were clinging to the Project . . . they were having a hard time in the colleges, in a sense, and they could look to more support from the Project for their work than from their colleagues."

Already at this early stage working to improve communications skills, the advisory teachers became aware that numeracy could hardly be separated from communications. "Numeracy just came along with," commented one of them, "once you got into situational and task-based learning, there was numeracy."

One of the successes of this phase of the work was the drawing in of a number of technical and specialist teachers—notably from the fields of electrical installation, telecommunications and auto-engineering—working on craft courses. Attendance of these teachers and their general studies colleagues at Isledon was encouraged by the Authority's willingness to grant additional teaching hours to colleges in order to compensate for the time spent away from their teaching duties.

This association of technical teachers with general studies teachers while still limited has proved fruitful in the development of contextual materials for use in communcation workshops and in a rather different way in providing something like a cadre of technical specialists, committed to working in this field, a number of whom were rewarded by Lecturer II appointments under the increased establishments given by the authority for lower-level work.

c. The Second Phase

Almost at once the Project found itself being led in two new directions—to full-time general education courses and to a concept of curriculum development no longer restricted to consideration of communication skills. The broadening of interest to include full-time courses was at first quite strongly resisted.

During the first phase of the Project's work its "set piece", as one of the advisory teachers called it, was the Pilot Course with the City and Guilds and the stereotyped student was defined by these characteristics:

"a. In the sixteen-to-nineteen age group;
b. indigenous, probably Caucasian, male;
c. and following the first year of a part-time day release craft course."

"About three years later," he went on, "the set piece had changed. The set piece became the RSA Vocational Preparation Course, and so the figurehead student was then female, probably not indigenous or if indigenous then black, a full-time student as opposed to a part-time apprentice. That's a very handy way of expressing the change of target and it wasn't something that happened in a willed way by the Project. In fact, I remember the inspector concerned was always saying "no you can't go that way, that's not what we're here for. We're here to help the City and Guilds work for craft students. . . ."

It was, however, barely possible for the advisory teachers to resist the pressure. In the colleges it was very often those general studies teachers servicing the craft courses that were also involved in the general education courses that had now received a measure of formal recognition from Appendix II. If the concepts underlying the communications work were appropriate for craft students, how could they not apply, suitably adapted, to at least the communcations and numeracy element of general education courses? It was a relatively short step from that position to considering whether there were other elements that could be transferred from part-time work to full-time courses and from what had always been recognised as directly "vocational" courses to "pre-vocational" courses.

"The truth was at Isledon we didn't catch what we were fishing for but caught all other kinds of fish that were concerned with full-time general education students and new kinds of courses that were already functioning and they took us their way."

It was a situation not at all dissimilar from the classical experience of further education in which a college finds itself moving down a road that it has not deliberately chosen to tread simply because the students are coming in through the doors with clearly formulated demands. It was not only a pressure that could not be resisted, it was an opportunity not to be lost. Appendix II itself had already stressed the need for careful consideration of content and method of the new types of general education course and at least by implication, had suggested that applications to develop new courses in this field required careful scrutiny. The criteria by which such course applications were to be judged were still lacking in any compact form. The Project could be seen as having a part to play in their formulation. At the heart of any such development communications workshop and workshop strategy were firmly planted. How that strategy and the activities of the workshop should relate to the other work on a course required exploration and elaboration. Thus the vocational preparation course in clerical duties which was piloted by the Project, assessed and finally adopted into its full canon by the RSA not only symbolised this second phase of the Project's development but has acted as a model for other general education courses of a pre-vocational character, developed within the colleges. These courses if they existed before the emergence of the model have tended to move towards its pattern; if they have arisen independently since that date, they have been substantially influenced, even though in some cases the influence would certainly not be consciously recognised by the course tutor.

Since the Project at the start was simply concerned with communications skills, the advisory teachers did not appreciate the extent to which they would be progressively drawn into a more general involvement with the strategy and methods of teaching.

"I think the big step was when we realised we were into issues at least as wide as any course, not just the communication component of a course. We couldn't think about that—the communication skills component—without thinking about the other classes in a course. And we were also compelled to take a view—as a lot of other people were similarly compelled—the Rubber and Plastics ITB for example—about how and where the young person stood—sort of "out of school", sort of "not in work", sort of "making a transition"—and that thinking had a lot of influence on us. It was very natural to begin to consider what young people needed to learn most; then really quite without noticing it we were into curriculum development in a general sense."[10]

The organic growth of the Project to this point had led them along a path not clearly perceived by them, in which they had formulated a general ideology arising out of communications work, piloted two courses one specifically for communication skills for part-time students, and a model pre-vocational course for full-time general education students; established a network of teachers, primarily but not exclusively concerned with general studies and communication courses across the colleges. Their work had, almost as a by-project, begun to produce criteria by which judgements could be made in the allocation of resources or in the approval of new growth. While the degree to which this latter possibility has been translated into fact is a matter of some dispute, its theoretical and potential importance is beyond dispute.

If an authority wishes to make a substantial shift of pattern in the established work of its educational institutions, and it requires that shift to be not merely formal but to be reflected in educational outcomes that will clearly profit students formerly neglected, it is not enough simply to put extra resources into the system, or even to declare the flow into one area must be reduced to increase the flow into another. Both the monitoring of the resource flow, ensuring that it gets to the points the authority intended, and the interpretation of the authority's impulse into appropriate education and curricular initiatives need to be guaranteed. For the normal bureaucracy of an authority to attempt either task with the instruments readily available to them is to invite disaster, a point well appreciated by most officers.

Thus some such flexible instrument as the ILEA's Curriculum Development Project is required so that, close to the teachers and the colleges, it can by its network, by its techniques of persuasion and its models open up the appropriate curricular views to be exploited and at the same time in subtle but effective ways establish the criteria by which new activities could be judged, encouraged or discouraged.

To say this is not at this point either to endorse or to dissent from what I shall call in a later chapter the orthodoxy that has been established. Nor is it even to accept that it is appropriate for the authorities to intervene at all at the level of curriculum, a delicate point that we shall return to in a later chapter. If, however, an authority does decide to control the overall pattern of the distribution of work and seek to use its resources to promote the preferred pattern, it must have recourse to a delicate monitoring mechanism to ensure that the inflow of resources is matched by the commitment of teachers and senior staff in the colleges.

d. The Third Phase

The third phase of the Project's existence opened with the move to Battersea, the appointment of additional advisory teachers, and the diversification of the workshop sessions.

The move gave the Project its own seminar accommodation. Teachers from the colleges can now attend for learning materials production on several days each week. The authority continues—even during the current period of pressure on resources—to allow colleges to remit two hours a week to one teacher from each college (this is a reduction from the original allowance) or in the case of merged colleges, from each pre-merger unit. In addition it is open to colleges to permit attendance of teachers by other arrangements agreed at the college, or teachers may if they wish attend in their own time.

The new accommodation has meant in the words of one advisory teacher "instead of our all being shovelled into the same workshop and having to sort out our groups and all compete for the same limited space, we can now space it over the week so there is no longer anything special about Tuesday afternoon." Instead of the standing invitation of Iseldon, the open door for all teachers on Tuesdays, teachers from the colleges now come for rather more specific tasks on particular half days. "I think it is true to say", said my respondent, "that that pattern has this year worked less well. It's more like streaming and classes in subject teaching, and rather less like running a workshop where you take people as they come from different occupations and fit them up as it were tool by tool."

To meet this new situation a new pattern is developing of less continuous commitment by teachers—a little set of two or three meetings on a particular topic—"How to use work experience?", for example,—where the experience of separate courses is generalised and made available for other teachers on different or parallel courses or for those responsible for leading course teams of different kinds, or for specific aspects of the curriculum.

It would be very easy for the Project in this third phase of its existence to abandon its "grass roots" tradition of working, to streamline and bureaucratize its activities, and produce centralised materials and directives on their use. Its critics in the colleges like to believe that this is already happening and scrutinize its activities constantly to discover indications of premature hardening of the arteries. The advisory teachers themselves are well aware that their strength lies in working with and for teachers and not in telling them how to teach. A major function of the Project has been the production of teaching materials for different kinds of course. Its workshops and its courses have not only been exercises in in-service training, they have always had as their major task the provision of the facilities for the development of materials for different courses primarily by the teachers teaching on them. The exchange of ideas and comments on the materials produced in this way between the advisory teachers and other teachers engaged in similar activities have also been a feature of this work. This practice has resulted in the sharing of material, and in the capacity for building up banks of material to furnish the communication and numeracy workshops in the colleges.

The Project has also provided prototypes and additional material for the CGLI *Communication Course* No 772 and model assignments for the RSA *Vocational Preparation Course* in clerical studies. It has more recently produced two packs which have been published in a very professional format thanks to co-operation with ILEA's Learning Materials Section: "Living in the City", and "Working in the City". These two consist of learning materials that have been collected from successful class practice or have been at least tried out with classes before publication. The first pack is really an anthology of successful material drawn almost entirely from different teachers in the colleges. The second one consists partly of similar material and partly of material emanating in the first instance from thinking in the Project, so it has been tested in many actual teaching situations. There is a third pack in preparation "Learning in a City" which is different by its very nature and by its intended mode of use. It stems directly from the thinking of Project members and still awaits extensive trials in the colleges.

This line of development may reflect an increasingly didactic attitude adopted by permanent members of the Project team, as its critics would maintain, or it may simply arise from the nature of the areas the materials were designed to service. The first two areas were already well explored in the work of teachers in the colleges, but the area of learning skills—as distinct from study skills—was relatively new and it was, so it is argued, appropriate for the initiative in this case to be taken not by the teachers from the colleges but by the advisory teachers.

There was one unfortunate experience which nevertheless helped the Project to recognise and accept the parameters within which it could work effectively. This was the discussion over a possible joint submission by ILEA colleges to the Technical Education Council's module on communications and general studies couched as TEC required in behavioural objectives. If it had been seen purely as a model—one of several possible models—it could have been a valuable disseminatory exercise, but *there was* a move to put pressure on the colleges to make it *the* ILEA submission. The objectors in the colleges won the theoretical issue. The authority could not compel them to use that model. TEC dealt directly with colleges not with the Authority. In practice, many colleges did accept the model—the new technical departments preferring it, even though it meant over-ruling the submissions of their general studies departments.

The advisory teachers are very conscious of their difficult role—as catalysts not as mentors. When asked to comment on the successes of the Project, one of them modestly disclaimed:

"One of the things about the Project is that it is very difficult to draw a line and say "the Project does this." It is the same with the materials production—you can't divide the efforts of the full-time personnel of the Project from the efforts of the teachers who come in with a bit of curriculum development work. If you look at the kits, they are actually the product of both teachers in the colleges and advisory teachers from the Project."

e. Summary

In the six years of its existence the Project can look to the establishment of communication and numeracy workshops in almost every college, the servicing of those workshops with centrally produced materials and their growing use even in the established courses at the colleges. There also has been growth in the number of multiskills workshops mainly in connection with courses funded by MSC but once established they become available to other courses in the college. The Project has also made important contributions as we have seen to the CGLI Course No 772 *Communications* and Course No 364 *Numeracy* and to the RSA *Vocational Preparation (Clerical)* Course. It has been the major coordinator and guardian of ILEA's bold attempt at a new type of link course the so called "Bridging" Course. At an earlier stage—and much more controversially—it designed together with some general studies teachers in the colleges a model submission to TEC for the general studies programme, embodying its own concept for a workshop strategy for communications. The TEC exploration was not one of the Project's successes. But other explorations have proved less controversial or less divisive. One of its bolder projects has been the extended Into Work Project being run in three colleges in conjunction with the Manpower Services Commission and embodying the concept of developing generic skills through an analysis of the skills required in the jobs for which these programmes are designed to prepare.

The Project a year into its third phase is pausing to take a look at itself. Several possible roads to development are open to it but, rather than rush down any one of them, it is attempting to take stock of the situation. It looks for a brief respite for consolidation and reorientation in order to be sure that its method of working is appropriate to the expanded role it has been called by circumstance to play, while at the same time not losing its grass roots contact with teachers in the colleges or its contact with their creative activity that provides the source of the Project's most productive thinking.

CHAPTER 4

New Curricular Perspectives

Section 1—Some Central Concepts of the Project's Thinking

The advisory teachers meet regularly once a week on Friday mornings under the chairmanship of the Staff Inspector. His colleague responsible for numeracy is also present. Their agendas cover mainly reports on current activity, exploration of new activities, incipient or potential, and lesser household matters. In the early days of the project when there were only three advisory teachers, these discussions necessarily took on a more fundamental character where basic principles were examined and a new curricular structure articulated. As the work has expanded and the tasks confronting the teachers have become more immediate speculative discussions ranging over a wide field elaborating basic principles do not occur. The elaborations still take place but in a covert fashion through the examination of practical issues, the discussion often couched in a restricted code whose jargon has great meaning for the participants but much less for the external observer. Thus the discussion that took place at the end of the first session in their Battersea headquarters had more than usual significance. Although overtly concerned with the need to consolidate the ground so far gained, the questions of how advisory teachers should work in the colleges and what order of priorities should be established among the hierarchy of tasks now facing the Project inevitably led to some consideration of more fundamental issues than could be usefully dealt with at the Friday morning meeting or in the course of other activities of the Project.

Because the team is a carefully selected group of committed teachers, who think rigorously about their special areas of competence and argue forcefully for their own detailed perceptions, they themselves are often more conscious of the differences between the positions they individually adopt, than the unity of their total position. They were a little astonished to be told of the way they are perceived in the colleges as a tightly-knit team with common beliefs. They were even more astonished when it was suggested that some teachers—not those on the network with whom they were accustomed to work—believed that they shared a unified, almost monolithic viewpoint dogmatically held, and pressed with fervour. There is no doubt that, however wrong it may be, such a belief is widely current.

Paradoxically, almost the opposite is true. Whilst there is a conceptual frame to their activities, it is largely implicit because it has been elaborated in a multiplicity of restricted activities arising out of particular situations. While these activities can often be the subject of scrutiny at Friday morning meetings, the principles that underlie recommendations advisory teachers may make or that govern their thinking have not been formally set out in any kind of extended form. Thus there is some confusion in many people's perception of the Project and its activities especially if they are not in fairly close contact with any of the advisory teachers.

"It's not surprising you know," said one of them "if you look at how the project works. It goes around in bits and pieces and it is true that a lot of people know that they ought to know and they do in fact pick up bits of information and even bits of jargon so they become the experts as it were! But there really aren't any occasions when anything like a complete summary of what the Project is about or why we are doing what we do can be given to people. It is just not written down nor is there ever any occasion when it's said. Thus it isn't surprising if people are a bit suspicious of what we're up to."

What follows in this chapter, therefore, is a distillation from the statements and writing of members of the Project on a number of occasions. It may have a more coherent and finished appearance than the characteristically gnomic pronouncements of individual advisory teachers on specific occasions or specific tasks but, while they cannot be held responsible for all the formulations that follow, they are unlikely to dissent from them.

There would appear to be four central concepts underpinning the Project's thinking which may be summarised by the words *context, work, skill, autonomy.* All four need to be comprehended and seen in relation to each other. Any of the last three taken out of context and out of relation with the thinking symbolised by the others will represent an isolated element not present in the coherent pattern of the Project's thinking. There have been many courses that allege they look towards preparing a young person for work, others that state they are concentrating on literacy and numeracy, others still that see as their goal the learner progressing towards independence. The attempt to see "work" as a central learning context, the emphasis on command of basic skills within that context, and as a means to the student's achieving responsibility for his own learning is a unique—and apparently paradoxical proposition—which has not been fully appreciated.

Section 2—Context

The dominant theme running through all the work of the Project is a continuing insistence on the importance of context in teaching.

In the matter of communication, contextual teaching arises naturally for language teachers who have a background of linguistics or who have a literary orientation with an emphasis on practical criticism. For both, meaning derives from context. In a document produced at City and East London college the importance of context in the teaching of communication skills through the medium of a communication workshop is made quite explicit:

"It is obviously undesirable to teach skills divorced from a meaningful context. As both our aim and objectives are rooted in the reality of every-day life, it was only logical to suppose that our course structure, both in content and form, must reflect this. As our emphasis is on the student's development of an ability consciously to control a situation without dependence upon an intermediary to perform for him, the core of the course had to provide the student with a tangible whole situation into which he could project himself realistically and within which he and his tutor could find some measure of his communicative competence. The skills objective must be constantly fed into a graded series of whole situations."

"In practice this means that we would establish a situation which we consider to be a realistic one for our students, for example a theft from their home. We then consider the communication needs this situation would present. The student might be called upon to telephone the police, submit a list of missing articles with approximate values, write a letter to his insurance company claiming on an insurance policy, and perhaps explain to a friend that a camera that he had borrowed had now been stolen. The input for the student would be a story relating the incident, and a before-and-after photograph from which the student has to list missing articles. The output would be an audio tape of conversation with the police-station; a written account of missing articles with approximate values; a lettter to the insurance company; and a video tape of the conversation with a friend."

Meaning derives from context—but this aphorism may apply not only to elements in a verbal context, but to other items—a module in the context of a course, a course itself in the context of a person's life and aspirations. The same elements in different contexts mean different things; change the context and you change the meaning. We are not only talking here of the objective physical context but the subjectiviely perceived context. A teacher's perception of the context of learning may not be the student's perception of context—thus the meaning of a classroom activity could be different for teacher and for student. A crystal clear exposition which is full of meaning for the teacher may be meaningless to the student because the context within which the exposition is made is quite different for each of them.

"Classroom learning can best be seen as an interaction between the teacher's meanings and those of his pupils, so that what they take away is partly shared and partly unique to each of them," writes Douglas Barnes and the best teaching on academic or vocational courses in schools or colleges may exemplify this dictum.[1] Where a cultural divide exists between teacher and learner—arising from social class differences, ethnic differences or other differences of lived experience—the lack of shared experience will lead to a lack of shared meaning. While the events may be identical for teacher and learner, and the physical ambience be the same, the personal context will be radically different and therefore the meaning of the event will be different for teacher and learner.

Such a situation may be an effective barrier to communication between teacher and learner and lead to the learner exercising a personal veto on learning—often with the connivance of the teacher within an unspoken agreement that the learner will not disrupt the lesson if the teacher does not go on too long.

"In most schools the social surface is preserved intact by teachers and pupils alike. The power that pupils do often operate is that of opting out; they conform and even play the system, but many do not allow the knowledge presented to them to make any deep impact upon their view of reality."[2]

With "second chance" students time is running out and to play the system does not make sense. If the barrier is to be overcome the context of the learner and that of the teacher have to approach each other to overlap if possible. Thus experiental forms of learning begin to justify themselves because in addition to being more intelligible to the learner they create a context of common experience that can begin to produce at least proximate meanings for both teacher and learner.

One of the great justifications of work experience is that it can begin to provide this common ground—that is if the teacher has not been a total academic and relentlessly pursued the route "school—college—school".

"What work experience does," said one tutor responsible for one of the more adventurous forms of link course, "is to provide an experience of adulthood and of the working world which we can all share. As tutors all our work in the first fortnight is with school kids. The school kids are in the foreground in a sense, although we are trying hard to meet the adult. It's due to a feeling we are communicating to them because we do not as yet share the experiences which will enable us to be colleagues as well as tutors. And once they have an experience of work we have common ground with them of an adult world. The college is a half-way house and I always try to get them get out of their heads it's about school; it's not an extension of school, it is a bridge on the way to work. It can also be a bridge on the way to education, but for most of them they would not touch the college if they felt it were an invitation to more education."

No project document makes an explicit statement about the relationship of context and meaning but the actions and essential agreements of the advisory teachers imply an underlying consensus endorsing this concept. The emphasis on experimental learning exhibited in communication and numeracy workshops, the multi-skills programme and work experience itself, the significance given to the move from the dependency on the teacher to autonomy and responsibility for one's own learning, are outcomes of this unspoken consensus.

Seen in this light the importance given to work and preparation for work is not an arbitrary gimmick nor a simple rehash of the arguments for "vocational" education. (Much 'vocational' education might prove to be as out of context for our students as their 'academic' education has been). It is the identification of the learning context that will give most meaning to the activities of these young people, one they have chosen themselves, often in a somewhat drastic fashion, withdrawing peremptorily from the standard academic field of action.

Teaching and learning in context is a practice that arises in language teaching. It first appears in second language teaching and then the teaching of the mother tongue, especially in the oral forms of the language when the emphasis is placed upon communication. But it has a wider relevance especially as a motivating force. If all the activities pursued on a course have a clear reference to the stated objectives of that course, then the individual parts derive their meaning and importance from the overall context. The course in turn will have a meaning derived from the social context in which it is established. Thus if all the lower-level courses in a given college get the worst accommodation, part-time staff, limited resources, then the meaning of those courses in that college imparted to them by their social context can be easily read by all the students. It is for this reason that the Community Relations Commission in its booklet "A Second Chance", while it called for special courses to be created, said "Colleges should also try to resist the temptation to hive off such courses to an annexe, well away from the centre of activity."[3]

There has been an unconscious chime between the intentions of the authority itself as expressed in its Appendix II policy, the activities of teachers engaged in this work in the colleges, and the articulation and clarification of those practices by members of the Project to ensure that the messages generated by the overall context of the activity and the specific messages the teachers are endeavouring to convey are not in conflict. The authority's attempts to enhance the work, the steady flow of resources into the area, the priority granted to it in some colleges gives a meaning to the overall endeavour which is lacking in parallel and apparently similar endeavours where these "contextual" features are lacking.

The use of the term "vocational" pejoratively by educationalists has a long history and when applied to a body of work can be an effective blocking mechanism to real thought about its actual character. Yet the "vocational" or "pre-vocational" emphasis in the Project's thinking arises from its acute sense of context and is an expression of the process noted in the previous chapter where the advisory teachers moved from a concept of teaching communication to a more generalised concept of curriculum development. The context that gives meaning to the communications skills that have remained unlearned (or at least ineffectively practised) if expanded, can give meaning and purpose to the broader learning experiences embodied within the course.

The development of this line of thinking has been essentially pragmatic, starting from the practice of teachers in the classroom who abandoning unsuccessful, often unworkable, approaches looked for alternatives. The Project has generalised these and in interaction with those teachers has come to formalise, still in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, a body of consistent curricular thinking that reveals some striking paradoxes.

Apart from the fundamental, unifying but mainly implicit emphasis on the importance of context at every level of activity, there are three main strands of the thinking of the project team that make up the warp of its curricula patterns. They may be categorised as:

ii. A clearly defined relation of education to work, the ultimate (and very often immediate) goal of students;
ii. An emphasis on basic skills—implying a strategy of limited objectives;
iii. A reliance on teaching strategies that help the learner to achieve a measure of control over his own learning, to become responsible for it, and thus help him towards autonomy.

To outside observers the major paradox in the Project's thinking is between the second and third strands in the warp. Critics do not perceive how programmes that begin with an emphasis on basic skills, deployed in limited contexts, can lead to self-motivated autonomous learning.

Section 3—Work and Skill

a. World of Work

The relation of the Project's thinking to work is illustrated by importance given to vocational preparation, work experience and to that area of activity often labelled "The World of Work". This is a title that appears in many syllabuses both in London and elsewhere. What is characteristic about the Project's approach is its consistency and its emphasis on practice and on experiental learning. Telling reluctant learners about trade unions in a lecture in a classroom half an hour before they are released for the day to enjoy the pleasures awaiting them outside, may be one way of providing "the world of work" session on a "pre-vocational" course. It is not the way of the Project. The lack of appropriate context destroys the meaning with which the teachers may wish to endow the subject matter; the contextural messages in fact are stronger and run counter to the lesson's overt text.

The overall context of the course has therefore to be agreed with the learner and accepted by him. The elements must be filled into that context and be congruent with it. This is one reason why the vague general education courses with well-intentioned but hazy objectives have been giving way to much more precisely structured courses leading more directly towards the world of work and drawing directly upon young people's experience of work in exploring it.

b. Vocational Preparation

The Project began as we have seen with a concern for the communication skills of students on day-release craft courses. The situation in which the skills were presented arose quite naturally from the vocational character of these courses and were drawn from the actualities of the job and the training the young person was undergoing for it. When teachers in the colleges began to urge the extension of this thinking to full-time general education courses, there was no ready-made set of situations to provide appropriate context for the work. The resolution of this difficulty lay in the recognition of the status of the adolescent. Much has been written about the state of "transition" but it is rare to find it consistently used as a basis for curriculum planning as to do so inverts the very assumptions upon which most formalised institutional education takes place. Most schooling assumes a content of which the student is ignorant and the teacher is master and which the student learns as a result of the activity of the teacher. The assessment of the student's success or failure depends upon his ability to repeat to his teacher's satisfaction, items of information he has acquired from or through his teacher, similarly to set forth concepts he has derived from his teacher or to resolve problems set by his teacher. The context in which this activity happens is the classroom. The textual contexts in which items are set to be learnt—the subjects to be studied—are academic constructs which do not relate closely to the real situation students find themselves in. For this system to work effectively—as it does for many academically orientated children—the objectives of the teachers conditioned by the needs of the subject must have priority over the objectives of the students.

"The organisation of knowledge into subjects which become quasi-institutions . . . encourages the teacher to view himself as the subject expert and to give his attention more to the goals of knowledge than to the processes by which pupils attain them."[4]

The system places emphasis on the skills of reading and writing, and much less on those of listening and speaking. It also makes the student dependent on the teacher. This state of dependency continues for the "student" through school and VIth Form into further and higher education. Thus the transition point is delayed until a young person is more mature physically and emotionally but it may be just as disjunctive when it occurs at 24 or at 18 as it is at 16. What is often talked of as a transition from school to work is the abrupt form facing 16-year-olds of a process experienced by all other adolescents—the transition from childhood to adulthood, from a situation of dependency to a situation of autonomy.

Thus any course which is to be really concerned with helping a young person through the transition needs to be conceived in different terms, with different objectives from those covering the standard academic curriculum. If "readiness for work" rather than "qualification by examination" is to be the target then not only has the form of assessment to be modified but readiness to leave the course may be seen as a mark of success (in contrast to the normal criterion adopted by teachers). The role of the teacher needs to change and his procedures require substantial modification to diminish the dependence of the student upon him and to help the student take increasing responsibility for his own learning. The building of a self-image of an autonomous adult and testing it against real situations is a process almost directly opposed to what is characteristic of the normal institutional experience of those 16-year-olds who stay on in full-time education. The self-image of a "student" is not particularly helpful for them; it is one that may have already been rejected.

The exploration of "vocational preparation" as the main purpose of full-time general education courses for our constituency of students by the Project's advisory teachers was the natural consequence of the broadening of their activity. It also exemplifies "the first big step" referred to earlier by an advisory teacher "when we were into issues as least as wide as any course."

The volume and degree of specificity of vocational preparation varies considerably over the full spectrum of general education courses offered in the colleges. The pattern in some colleges reflects a fairly close liaison between the advisory teachers and the college staff teaching on those courses; elsewhere conceptions deriving from different traditions may dilute the Project's thinking. Again there may be a greater or less emphasis on the diagnostic aspects of vocational preparation or on attitudinal development. The two aspects were held in balance in the Vocational Preparation (Clerical) Course developed in collaboration with the RSA and regarded during the second phase of the Project's development as the "set piece" which largely epitomised its thinking and indicated possible ways of opening up other vocational areas.

The preface to the report on the seven pilot courses run in ILEA colleges during 1977 and 1978 expresses some general principles underlying that course:

"It had always been felt that such programmes should not cause students to be subject to the stress of working towards conventional academic targets, a form of learning which, on past performance, many had found difficult and unrewarding. Nor should the courses be too job specific; they might however capitalise upon discernible vocational motivation and they should attempt to draw out potential by exposing students to successful learning experiences which would lead to a nationally reputable form of certification . . .

"The original syllabus took pains to ensure that what would be learnt in general education (language and numeracy skills) could be readily and understandably related to the practical and manipulative parts of the course which, in this particular instance, aimed to prepare students for a range of occupation involving general clerical skills."[5]

The earlier report upon the first two pilot courses run in the session 1976–1977 explained that "the syllabus is not one which merely enshrines customary practice, but calls for distinctively new learning priorities new teaching strategies and new patterns of organisation." It went on to indicate "the direction of intended change is towards vocational preparation which:

i. is felt by the young person as timely, even urgent;
ii. relates directly and clearly to employment realities;
iii. offers learning which may be described as in the psychological proximity to work;
iv. fosters a self-image as a worker rather than as a student.

"It must be stressed that this intended change does not represent a reduction in the importance of personal development in favour of job-specific training. Nor does it represent a shift towards employer's priorities at the expense of employee's interest; nor does it, in its active concern with employability in the shortish term, ignore considerations of high aspirations or further learning; hopefully it represents an accommodation of benefits for all concerned and provides a more self-explanatory and motivating learning experience for the young people. It does not aim to meet all learning needs, only those that are crucial at this particular stage of the young person's life."[6]

While this course is not job specific it is concerned with work with a limited range of skills which may be deployed in a number of different fields. Clerical skills are used not only in an environment which can be clearly defined as an office but in other places such as the forecourt of a filling station, the reception area of a garage, on a milk round, in a warehouse and so on. One of the by-products of technological change has led to a re-ordering of jobs and a change in their hierarchical position.

A principal from a college in the North of England discussing the skills required by young people today says "some have high but narrow skills, others deploy a range of limited skills and some do jobs of critical importance, often on equipment of immense value. And this group is a steadily growing proportion of the labour force".

"This is often because traditionally craft-based industries have become capital intensive, whilst new technology moves away from dependence on manual skills. Former skill-based industries are now process industries more in need of technicians and skilled operators than broad based craftsmen."[7]

But as an ILEA careers service officer pointed out other jobs are coming up as a result of these developments and their administrative implications "There are all kinds of new opportunities in different kinds of offices, different kinds of shops and different kinds of warehouses which would traditionally have been looked on as dead end jobs but which are no longer necessarily so A job in a warehouse might be the first step towards supervisory status and first-line management.

A feature of the Vocational Preparation Course (Clerical) as practised in some colleges is also a feature of one aspect of the Project's thinking. In a paper on the "Development of Appendix II in ILEA colleges" one of the advisory teachers wrote:-

"Young people readily associate going to college with "bettering themselves" in a general way. This attitude needs to be developed so that "going to college" is conceived more concretely as taking a *particular* course and "bettering themselves" is conceived as a set of clearly-understood learning objectives."[8]

The logic of this position and of the idea of fostering "a self-image as a worker and not as a student" has implications for the length of stay of the student.

"It will be in the interest of many students in Appendix II courses to leave the college when a suitable job-opening presents itself. Profitable employment is the *end*, and the college course is the *means*. The end must have the preference over the means where a choice has to be made."[9]

Such a statement contrasts sharply with the traditionally held views of teachers both in schools and colleges. It is axiomatic for many that to stay in college must always be better than to leave and that those who do leave are in some sense to be considered failures. Even where certain students are manifestly not achieving the declared objectives of the course, teachers may be reluctant to see them go. As one course tutor explained:

"There was a general education ethos that they were here in a college environment and this was developing them socially and in confidence and the rest of it. In fact they were 70% of their time in the common room or somewhere like that and not always because of their own choice. Sometimes they were very fed up and disappointed . . . and yet the teachers' view was, really, that things were so bad for them outside the college that it must be better for them inside."

The contrast between the progressive" attitude allegedly exhibiting "caring" qualities but maintaining the dominance of the teacher and the student's dependence on the teacher and the attitude informing vocational preparation of helping the students achieve autonomy could hardly be more clearly exemplified.

c. *Work Experience*

The growing prominence of work experience on Appendix II courses of all kinds and fostered by the advisory teachers on the Project is perhaps the most important testimony of the centrality of work in their curricular thinking. Just as it is logical to leave a vocational preparation course for a job when you are at the stage of readiness to make the move, so if the course is to be largely concerned with experiential learning, experience of work, the goal of the course, must be an important feature of it.

We perhaps need at once to distinguish between "work experience" as an element within a course and "Work Experience" as offered by the MSC in its Youth Opportunity Provision. In the latter case work experience is the major learning experience and the contribution of the "college" session—which may not necessarily take place in a college—is to reinforce, clarify, compare and reflect upon the experiences of the young people in their placements. One way in which the two forms of work experience can effectively inter-relate is shown by Melanie's experience in Chapter 1 where after following the RSA *Vocational Preparation (Clerical)* course and a period of temporary employment in a hairdressers, she proceeded through a Youth Opportunities "Work Experience on Employers Premises" Scheme sponsored by the Petroleum Industry Training Board to employment in her chosen career.

"Work experience" as an item in the curricular thinking of the Curriculum Development Project while not totally unrelated is only one element within a course rather than the total content of the course. It is nevertheless seen as an important part of the course and its incorporation into a growing range of general education courses, even courses other than those that are clearly designated as "vocational" or "pre-vocational", is a striking phenomenon.

In the colleges the nature and quality of the work experience offered varies according to the reasons why it is being included in the course and the level of understanding of the teachers involved of how it may be exploited in the young people's interest.

In the past it has been usual for most teachers to neglect the kinds of work which many young people have experience—part-time evening work, Saturday jobs, paper rounds, and so on—as possible sources of learning. Traditionally, these activities have always been viewed as hostile to the schooling progress, as anti-educational, and ignored when they cannot actively be combatted. Work which cannot be conceived as a "career" and presented in an idealised and usually distant form is foreign to the thinking of academic teachers. Attitudes of this kind have for some time been countered by the work of many careers teachers and outside the school and college by the Careers Advisory Service, but it is uphill work.

For the advisory teachers who are encouraging the growth of a pedagogy based on experiential learning, work experience is a vital element within a course. From work experience the most valuable lessons can be learned by pupils and it can inform much of the rest of the work. Work experience can be used in a number of ways—*diagnostically*, discovering what a young person can and cannot do, and what they like doing and what they do not like doing; *cognitively*, identifying skills and information to be learnt or offering a field of practice for what has been learned; or *attitudinally*, helping the young people to come to terms with themselves in new and sometimes rather frightening situations and managing their relationships with peers and adults.

On any given course the emphasis may be placed on one of these three aspects—or on a combination of all three. Which aspect the emphasis falls most heavily upon will turn on the way the work experience is organised and how it is followed up by the teachers. The advisory teachers have not attempted to establish a dogma or impose a stereotype of this work, but to disseminate the concept of work experience and the practice of differing forms of work experience. For example, at a meeting of course tutors, present by invitation, engaged in the RSA *Vocational Preparation* (Clerical) courses, tutors with successful but different patterns of work experience from two quite distinct areas of vocational preparation—clerical and photography skills—explained their mode of organising work experience, what they expected their students to learn from it and what steps they took to help their students to derive the maximum benefit from it.

There are at least three main patterns of work experience, one day a week over a given period (usually most of the course); a block of one or more weeks (usually a week or a fortnight but exceptionally longer) and a hybrid version, a day a week leading to a short block (or occasionally a reverse of that pattern). There are advantages and disadvantages for each pattern, and the choice of pattern may arise from what the tutors see as its most important purpose; alternatively it may, by its nature, determine what use can be made of it. A senior lecturer responsible for a number of Appendix II courses commented on this question in these terms:

"There are about as many reasons for work experience as there are students because each of the kids has a view as to why they are doing it. . . . The general reasons are first that most of them are totally unclear what kind of jobs they want to do and they just use any job to get the feel of what it's like to be out of work. The hope is that through going out to work in a number of different jobs they come to some decision about where they think they would eventually like to work. The second case is that a student has a clear idea about what he wants to do and he will not be moved off that view. So you put him in to check out whether that's really what he wants and often he'll come back and say it isn't. The third reason is just to give them an experience of the world of work in a very general kind of way and in this case you say to them 'It doesn't really matter what you'll be doing, just choose any job'."

While the emphasis in that statement is largely if not entirely on the diagnostic aspect of work experience—an extension of job sampling and taster activity—most tutors would agree with the view advanced by another senior lecturer who when asked if it supplemented the diagnostic work of vocational preparation courses remarked:

"My view is that it is very much a supplemental activity, but not of the second order. It may be of an equal order to the total learning agenda for the student."

What that statement really signifies is spelt out by another tutor in terms which would command the support of the advisory teachers:

"It's the experience that is central, but it's not the point of the course at all in this sense. I think it's really important to see that there are two levels of the course; one has to do with all the skills and the details and the other has to do with the inner curriculum that in turn is concerned with the growth and development of self awareness and the adultness of the young person." That is testified to by the experience of both tutors and students.

"In the two weeks in college in preparation for work experience you are dealing with a lot of young people who are school kids, who have been failures in school and all the formal structures of education, desperately trying to take up the role of being young adults in a college. On the first day of work experience, they come back to college and you see, in 75% of the cases at least, a very clear transformation. They look like adults, they don't look like kids. They have a completely different look on their faces."

The most popular pattern of work experience with teachers would seem to be one day a week. Spread over three terms it allows for variation in placement so that a young person can try or two or three or even more placements. It is the most useful form if the diagnostic purpose is seen as the dominant one. It may also offer a broader experience and allows more easily for adjustment. If understanding of the work situation and self understanding leading to personal growth is the main objective many claim the block form is preferable, because it is more realistic and allows a young person to see a given task through to its end. What pattern of placement is preferable also depends on what kind of jobs the young people will do.

"With block release", said an advisory teacher, working to the business studies Inspectorate, "you've got the problem where you place your block. If you put it too late in the course it loses all its motivational impact on the course, if you put it too soon it's debatable whether the kids have enough skills to operate in an office for a long time at a stretch."

Some tutors have arranged two blocks, one in the autumn term and one in the spring term, and the most favoured pattern but the most difficult to arrange in practice is one that combines both kinds—a day a week for most of the year ending with a week or fortnight at Easter or in the summer term.

While some teachers may prefer the day-a-week system because it is more protective for their students, others may condemn it because it increases the dependence of students on tutors and may not help to confront them effectively with reality. But even teachers who favour block-release may be over-protective, like the teachers who regularly 'phoned to see if certain pupils were out of bed each morning of work experience.

Accepting responsibility for timekeeping is very much an item on the learning agenda of students on work experience and only they can learn it. The diaries kept by students reveal this as something they understand very clearly. In their efforts to make an unfamiliar journey by bus and tube from South London to arrive at Islington or the City on time they make prodigious efforts which often contrast sharply with those they make to accomplish the much shorter journey to college. "I think the whole experience of getting themselves to and from work on time and relating to other people are probably the most useful things about work experience," said one advisory teacher.

But these lessons are not necessarily learnt automatically. A senior lecturer commented "I sometimes think that the bland statement that work experience is good really has to be questioned. It's in what kind of context and with what kind of focus the kids embark on work experience and how it is evaluated that determines what they're going to get out of it." She went on to explain that while some came back (her courses favoured a block system) changed through experience of work and that for some "all that fear about going to work was unfounded; experience of work for some can be devastating. I mean they can dismiss work as something they don't want to do in the same way as they already dismiss schooling as something they don't want to do, because of the way it is offered them and the context in which it is offered."

Another teacher believes that "the exchange between the students, when they come back from their work experience is probably the most important couple of hours during the week when they discuss what they have been doing because of its vivid reality. Even where there's a bad job the actual exploration of what they're doing and why they're bored is so instructive for the other students it really has a tremendous impact on a course."

It is this way of using work experience, not only with the individuals but with the group, that for another tutor justifies the day-a-week pattern. "One of the important things about their going out one-day-a-week is that every week they've actually got that contract with the outside world. It doesn't just happen suddenly and then get forgotten about; it happens every week, and you've got to follow up in the college about what's happened in the work placements."

Most tutors visit their charges some time in the work placement, unless as happened in one case a boy was working on a building site and his tutor was a woman. Conscious of his possible embarrassment, she overcame her feminist prejudices and confined her visit to the site manager's hut! Some teachers, however, have shown themselves sufficiently naive to send young people on short block work experience without either visiting the work-place or requiring the young person to come in on at least one evening to report progress. While the tutors present must not be intrusive especially on a block experience, there must always be the possibility of some kind of exchange between tutor and student.

To help students make the most of work experience and to enable tutors to use their pupil's experience as the basis for a more systematic study of work the team of advisory teachers have produced a work experience learning pack in alternative versions which is a guide to the young person in exploring his work situation and an aid in organising what he has learnt about it. The packs also contain a series of exercises in communication skills, supplementing other work done in the communications workshops by offering a useful context.

The systematic exploration of the work placements by such means or by individual or group discussions provides a pool of experience and information upon which the activities and explorations characterised as the "World of Work" may be based. One of the difficulties of describing low-level courses in London and the contribution of the Project group is the fluid nature of the object of study. Courses and activities change from year to year and undergo modification in the course of the year. Statements of objectives and content may stay unmodified but by subtle transformation the developments may be radically different though conforming to the same descriptive labels. This is particularly the case where the Project—with its concern for communication and relationships—may transform by its methodology and pedagogic emphasis a static piece of transmission teaching—basically the teacher teaching "about"—into an active piece of interpretative learning in which the students assimilate skills and knowledge into an active process of practical understanding of themselves and their social environment.

Thus the "World of Work" is something of an umbrella title that has included two rather different inputs. One, coming from experience in the schools with careers teaching, examines the kind of world young people will enter on leaving school, its opportunities and the steps necessary to avail oneself of them. It may also include an attempt to consider relationships at work, and the personal problems young people face on the other side of the transition. The other source for this work in further education general education or pre-vocational courses is a borrowing of material covered in "Background to Business" or "Industrial Studies" on vocational courses—information about commerce and industry, trade unions, health and safety legislation, and what work was like. The mode of instruction has been essentially didactic, with the presentation of information, though often illustrated by visits outside or the visits of speakers from industry and commerce, supplemented very occasionally by some teachers with sessions of role play and simulation.

With the inclusion of work experience on courses a more exploratory approach becomes possible; students can contribute from their own explorations and perceptions. The recognition that mastery of purely verbal skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing needs to be extended to gain access to a range of non-verbal skills, if communication is to be effective, gives rise to the concept of "life and social skills". As these need to be exercised in a context, the conjuncture of work experience with the teaching of life and social skills produces a new experimental approach to examining the world of work. The syllabus and heads may still remain the same but the activity of the students will be transformed.

The Project team has not adopted a prescriptive mode of practice by the issue of model curricula and model pedagogics from a position of authority, although that is the image that is sometimes projected by their critics. Their mode of working is essentially collaborative and is well illustrated in the way in which at least two versions of a suggested syllabus for "social, life and communications skills" have evolved for use primarily on TSD sponsored courses of the "Into Work" variety. Meetings of teachers in the field were held and from them ideas emerged which an advisory teacher welded together into a first draft. This draft became the working document at the long summer residential course held at Dartford College where it was worked on by other teachers, some of whom hotly contested some of its assumptions. It was then passed on eventually to a small sub-committee meeting at Isledon who produced several drafts which have been disseminated. There is no definitive form and the draft consists largely of a catalogue both of objectives and content. Tutors responsible for courses in discussion with their colleagues working on the course will make their own selection of objectives to match the specific needs of students and course and select those other suggestions which meet their interpretation of those needs. While there was no imposition of a curriculum, the process of discussion did reveal a difference not merely of emphasis but of attitude to this area of work which will be examined in a later chapter. In most of the forms in which it was produced, although it is couched (as is now the fashion) in terms of aims and objectives, it has an appendix on strategy and resources largely identical in all drafts. The appendix identifies the kind of learning activities that will relate to the strategy in promoting the objectives and the learning resources human and non-human which can be used in the activities. The skills the student will be expected to develop are stated and the role of the teacher is briefly discussed. Finally, the level at which objectives selected can be carried out is related to the course and the amount of time available. Four broad models of courses are identified with putative figures of the number of hours to be devoted to social and life and communications skills which are conceived as being taught as a unity. Space in the document is left for teachers to insert other course models with more or less time for this activity as they emerge.

The document, the way it has been engendered, its dissemination and its mode of use are useful witnesses to the collaborative mode of working of the Project and also to the catalytic nature of the advisory teachers leadership. This example is perhaps of particular interest because the area of curriculum is one that has aroused some of the greatest controversy.

Section 4—Autonomy of the Learner

The fourth strand of the thinking of the curriculum development Project is in some ways the most important, the most controversial and the least understood. Discussion of this concept involves a series of paradoxes which often appear to confuse the plain man observing from without or even the plain teacher trying to cope with a difficult assignment of teaching under-motivated students—under-motivated, that is, for learning what the teacher has to teach. The kind of controversy which we look at in the next chapter may appear to such observers comparable to the speculations of medieval schoolmen. Nevertheless, in terms of outcomes for the students it has real significance.

The basic paradox lies in the proposal that a person who has failed to profit from 11 years of schooling should now be able to become responsible for his own learning and will be able to decide for himself what are the priorities of his learning agenda. The second paradox is that a person diagnosed as heavily deficient in basic skills—of communication, of thinking, of life itself—can be helped to independent learning by a limited but rigorous regime devoted to the acquisition and exercise of those skills.

Most people would concede that those supposedly at the frontier of knowledge, such as research students working for a PhD, could be involved in independent learning. After all, they are going where no-one has trodden before. Again a more liberal interpretation might agree that a progressive VIth form teacher may, by projects and creative activity, involve his pupils in a measure of independent learning—in the Mode Three sections of their 'A' level for example, if indeed he is progressive to that degree, or in the first year of the course, or after the examinations. A teacher using the materials of the Schools Council's Humanities Project may also claim to be encouraging "independent learning". How can a body of teachers advocating a skills-based curriculum, with limited objectives of a practical kind, claim to be in the business of developing the autonomy of students and the promotion of independent learning?

The answer lies not in what is taught but how it is taught, and in the subordinating of 'what' to 'how'. The process is the educational key to unlock the learner's difficulties; the content is that which most effectively serves that end; and the skills are the lubricants needed to permit the process to function.

In stating the second paradox above we talked about "a person diagnosed as heavily deficient in basic skills". Perhaps the words "heavily deficient" may need re-examination.

One of the documents produced by the Project analysing "English language features in classes in FHE colleges in the ILEA" comments in this way on "deficiency";

"There is a good deal of myth about the "deficiency" of students whose oral and written performance does not meet the norms teachers require. The most damaging aspect of this myth is the equating of verbal and, especially, written performance with innate intellectual capacity. Students intellectual equipment is often regarded as synonomous with the level of written performance; indadequate written work being said to indicate limited intelligence. There is a sizeable body of research evidence which shows that this equation is very suspect."[10]

The young people we met in Chapters 1 and 2 were not ineffective communicators in situations of their normal life. The problems they encountered arose from the diverging cultures of themselves and their teachers. Their failure to learn is as much a failure of communication on the part of their teachers as of themselves. We do not normally talk of the deficiency of communication skills on the part of "educated" people yet the ability to speak across cultural divides and be comprehended—effectively comprehended—is a skill of a very high order which relatively few are possessed of. Successful political leaders and popular "personalities" of radio and television are among those few.

Basil Bernstein wrote in an article in New Society;

"If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must be first in the consciousness of the teacher."[11]

The dictum applies both to the development of the courses and activities favoured by the Project but in reverse to the progress of young people adapting and extending their existing repertoire of communication skills to the range of situations in which they may wish to operate but of which they have so far no direct experience. While the activity may seem devoid of "content" and be concerned purely with the rehearsal of skills the skills cannot be rehearsed in a vacuum, and therefore the context selected for rehearsal while subordinate to the skills themselves endows meaning to the activities for the student. This is the significance of the learning packs produced by the Project "Living in the City", and "Working in the City" and some of the other material collaboratively produced for use on particular courses, where the assignments and case studies require the student to draw on his existing experience or to extend it in the process of performing the practical requirements, for example of completing forms and questionnaires, recording messages and reports, making statements orally or in writing and so on. The "content" is the self-discovery rather than the situations, just as the "content" of the work experience Melanie talked about in Chapter 1 was not the activities she was being trained in but was her learning that she was capable of performing them if she had confidence in herself. If self-realisation is not obtained simply by being told about something, even about oneself, by another person, neither will raw experience itself by likely to effect this end. Experience, unless it is filtered through mature reflection or mediated through discussion with others, may present a blank face to the learner, a rock wall he is too intimidated to climb. The movement from a state of dependency in one's learning activities to a state of relative autonomy is a gradual process to be accomplished cooperatively by teacher and learner.

At quite an early stage of the Project's thinking, this emphasis on the learner becoming responsible for his learning began to emerge. A document emanating from City and East London College in 1971 and describing the communication unit mentioned as one of the areas of potential development:

"A course structure and organisation to achieve what has become our basic aim: a student with the skills and knowledge to influence his environment in a self-determined direction according to the demands of the situation in which he finds himself."

The workshop strategy with its system of individualised learning has been conceived by the Curriculum Development Project and its precursor as a means of advancing this growing control of the learner over his learning to meet the demands of the situations he encounters. But some systems of "individualised learning" and certain kinds of assignment while offering lip service to the concept of assisting the student to become autonomous, in fact reassert the teacher's control over the student by isolating him with his task, and over what he learns, by requiring him simply to reproduce information that the teacher already possesses. This kind of work sheet which requires a closed response—merely a tick or a cross, and no genuine response from the teacher, is really a form of assessment rather than a stimulus to learning. The materials developed by the Project are in general not of this kind. There is usually room for the student to move—to make his own decision or an individual discovery, or a personal evaluation. While the activity may occur in the presence of the teacher or in his absence, many assignments call for cooperative or small-group work. Where the material being used is the actual experience of the students—on external explorations, or work experience, or other encounters—the teacher cannot control the material in the way a subject teacher controls his subject. At most he can help the student to order his experiences. To the extent that much experience will be unforeseen or even unexpected the teacher is a learner himself. This collaborative role does not always come easily to teachers whose training and tradition is against it, nor is it something which can be imposed upon teachers against their will by edict of head of department, principal, inspector or member of the education authority.

This process of movement from dependency to autonomy in learning has produced two useful concepts—the "negotiated" curriculum and the "personal learning agenda". These concepts derive from a firmly-held belief that people learn what they want to learn and that ultimately they are the best judges of what they need to learn. Only the person who wears the shoe knows whether and where it pinches. A person's ability may be latent and untapped but it will emerge if it can be confronted with the sequence of learning situations which call it forth. There is thus an emergent learning agenda within each person—even though only the first item on the agenda is present to the view. The treatment of that first item is crucial—if it is dealt with successfully the next item emerges, and the next and the next, as the learner becomes more and more aware of his own needs and his own purposes, as he encounters learning situation after learning situation. The establishment of the initial items, the devising of appropriate learning situations, possible within the frame of the workshop strategy, allow the teacher and learner to negotiate a pattern of activity. The contract thus arrived at is of short duration to cover the immediate goals—the first items on the agenda. As progress is made however the agenda lengthens but with the growth of skill and understanding the learner becomes progressively responsible for its management. This process of negotiation and assistance in helping the emergence of the learning agenda calls for a collaborative stance on the part of the teacher.

The Appendix II development has produced a substantial number of teachers of high quality who can operate in this style and who have drawn on the expertise of the advisory teachers to improve their performance. The advisory teachers in turn have learned from the experience of the teachers in the field and diversified their repertoire of responses.

This crucial concept has by no means been fully elaborated and the task of elaboration is a continuing one. The 1979 summer residential course held at Dartford had as one of its themes "Stages of Learner Development." Teachers coming on the course, in their working groups, explored the general concept of the transition from learning situations dependent on the teacher through the phase of negotiated learning to the stage of student controlled learning. A learner always dependent on teacher-controlled situations will find strict limits to his possible learning. A learner who arrives too soon and unready at the stage of student-controlled learning may not perceive his own needs accurately, may make bad choices in selecting the sources of his learning, may have inadequate standards to monitor his own performance and end up disappointed by not achieving his objectives.

He needs to pass through a "negotiated" phase of learning in which, through collaborative activity with the teacher, he learns to establish his own purposes and modes of achieving them. The medium through which this is achieved is the workshop strategy, and while at first glance the emphasis on skills may have appeared unduly restrictive, by siting the practice of those skills in appropriate and relevant situations, the learner learns to free himself from the constraints he has hitherto experienced upon his learning and transcends the situation to become an autonomous learner.

The teacher's role in this central phase is not easy to perform but teachers who attended found the course helpful and spoke warmly of it. The first two pages of the working papers for this course are appended and lucidly illustrate the general apophthegm quoted on the first page: "Appendix II provision, therefore, addresses itself to the emergent *adult*, not to the disappearing *child*."[12]

APPENDIX I

Inner London Education Authority

FHE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

COURSE FE46: 16–19 SUMMER COURSE—3–11 JULY 1979

STAGES OF LEARNER DEVELOPMENT

Appendix II provision needs to take note that:

i. it is a SHORT-STAY provision (by comparison with school), so priorities have to be picked, and some losses cut;
ii. (nevertheless) it can make a lot of difference to the students (they can learn fast, change outlook, gain confidence);
iii. as a 'second chance' provision it is different in aim, content and method from the first chance (school);
iv. it is seriously counter-productive to institutionalise students (the role of STUDENT is misleading in some ways);
v. the student needs to use colleges to become an effective learner OUTSIDE college, where learning is not in classrooms, set out in syllabuses, organised by teachers;
vi. the student is in TRANSITION from one state of life to another, the second state of life requiring him, more often and more crucially, to stand on his own feet, make up his own mind, pick his own aims, choose his own associates, deal with conflicts, etc.

Appendix II provision, therefore, addresses itself to the emergent ADULT, not to the disappearing CHILD.

In seeking to promote autonomy Appendix II provision must offer opportunities for autonomous learning, minimising any contradiction between aim and method.

This means sharing control with the student so that:

i. he identifies his own learning needs and objectives (see 'Work and Learn');
ii he chooses tasks which contribute to the achievement of his objectives, deciding when and how to tackle them;
iii he chooses the social features of the learning environment, ie with whom he will be working and from whom he will be learning;
iv. he assesses his own competences and progress;

There are necessary restraints on the student's control of his learning:

i. he has often been conditioned to associate learning with dependency, and may prefer to keep it that way;
ii no-one can cope with too much autonomy too suddenly;
iii in particular instances tutelage is the best way to learn. (Copy the skilled person and do what he says).

But there are also unnecessary restraints on the students' control of his own learning:

i the teacher's anxiety about knowing best, being in charge;
ii. the teacher's underestimation of the student's willingness to take responsibility, intelligence;
iii. the teacher's conscious or unconscious desire to keep-make the student dependent.

What compromises are made? Where is the balance between the student-control and teaching to be struck? Where and how can the student's learning be more autonomous?

ILEA FHE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. COURSE FE46: 16—19 SUMMER COURSE—3—11 JULY 1979

STAGES OF LEARNER DEVELOPMENT

	Stage 1—Teacher	Stage 2—Negotiated	Stage 3—Student-controlled
Objectives	Teacher decides by tests, intuition, assumption, etc what student needs to achieve (or simply enacts decisions made further back by examining board, college or 'tradition').	Student formulates his own learning objectives, the teacher providing the means, the opportunity and asking the necessary questions.	Student chooses his own learning objectives, from accurately perceived needs; or from inaccurately perceived needs; or by whim.
Tasks	Teacher decides what the student should do, how and when he should do it.	Student and teacher reach successive agreements, in a flexible 'workshop' situation, about what tasks the student should do, how to go about them, and in which order.	Student decides what to do, how and when to go about it, perhaps vis-a-vis self-selected objectives, perhaps inconsequentially.
Social Environment	Teacher/college fixes learning groupings, then 'class-teaches' thus restricting the development of cross and sub-groups with self-defined and shared learning interests.	Teacher encourages 'ad hoc' groupings for particular tasks within the workshop, making participation optional. Teacher puts items on the peer group's agenda.	Student enters into 'free associations' for learning and other purposes. These associations (who to learn with/from) may be well or ill chosen.
Assessment	Teacher assessed student's work (perhaps reflecting criteria and standard's imposed by examining board, college or 'tradition'.	Student assesses his own work, but teacher insists on appropriate STANDARDS (personal progress, 'good enough' in ordinary life, expected by employers).	Student decides whether his own work is good enough, according to his own standards.

CHAPTER 5

Knowledge or Skill

Section 1—Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

Whether it was the intention of the authority in safeguarding the low-level work formerly carried on in the local Colleges of Further Education to introduce an alternative pattern of curriculum and method of curriculum design, its actions in discriminating in favour of Appendix II work and concurrently establishing the Curriculum Development Project have inevitably led to such a pattern emerging. Had their initiative been limited to one action or the other or had the actions been widely separated in time the impact of each would have been severely limited. The Communications Project would have remained closely associated with craft apprentices and their general studies teachers; the building of the disseminating network and the demands made in turn by that network upon the project would not have taken place. The natural outcome of the mergers would have been for the colleges to expand the upper reaches of their work and to push the lower-level work back into schools, into Government industrial training centres, or into non-existence.

On the other hand once the authority had decided upon the political initiative to foster growth at this level, not merely to safeguard existing work, some institution like the Curriculum Development Project became inevitable. It is reminiscent of Voltaire's quip about God. If it had not already existed it would have had to have been invented. The special staffing agreed by the authority would not have been enough by itself. Even the most imaginative of staffing proposals, the appointment of independent senior lecturers working to Vice-Principals and now emerging in most colleges as curriculum development officers, would not have borne such fruit had there not been a central point of reference.

Several principals indicated the problems of initiating Appendix II programmes in areas where they had not previously existed.

"That's why the model in my view, "said one, "hasn't really taken off. Because there was nothing in it for principals. In fact there was a lot in it they would actively try not to take on board, such as, diffident students, problems, conflicts with lecturers who had been used to teaching at various levels who were now being asked to absorb increasing numbers of people who had no idea what they really wanted to do and would certainly not conform to facing five 'O' levels if that's what you were putting them into . . . in fact principals were not interested, they tried to take the goodies without doing any of the work."

Another principal whose college has some of the most interesting examples of low-level course development did not believe that the simple labelling of certain posts as Appendix II posts helped very much to promote the work at this level. "You have this delightful cop out in the Appendix itself which says "The best insurance is of course the ready acceptance by everyone at the college of the importance of the work and the concern for the needs of those who do not attend school or college at all."

"Easy to write! However I'm not sure that the existence of people holding Lecturer Grade II posts designated Appendix II is much insurance if the college machine is fundamentally ignorant or uncaring about the needs of students with this sort of characteristic. It is perfectly possible for an individual who has no concern or care for Appendix II students to be given a post which is labelled Appendix II and just not carry out the duties. So that I don't myself think that the actual existence of posts makes much difference. I think there is an element of moral authority in the fact that there is a label, but if you're dealing with people who are fundamentally amoral or immoral that won't take you very far."

Faced with such a position where the authority by administrative action and grants of resources to the colleges could not effectively insure its policies were implemented some other agency was essential.

"The need for curriculum development was great" said the first of these principals" and there was also a need for a whole review of the social situation and the environments and the methods of teaching."

Whether the Curriculum Development Project as established and as it has functioned has been fully able to meet the prescription is open to doubt but without it progress would have been much slower.

"I think" said an advisory teacher "the Project is a very useful accelerator. I think it is easy to overstate the extent to which it gives a sense of direction and it wouldn't have amounted to anything if things hadn't been going on all the time in the colleges. But as an accelerator I think it's been pretty effective in some areas."

Its work has had three important aspects for the staff of the colleges working on low-level courses. It has been a focus for their thinking about the courses they were teaching on and for which they were casting about to find alternative curricula. It has also been an important source of information and through the network of Appendix II teachers it has passed that information into colleges at levels to which it rarely seeps down along the official channels. And finally, it has acted as a centre of mutual support for teachers engaged in what has often been an unpopular activity in the colleges and who, without the Project, would have been working unsupported in relatively isolated positions. This latter point clearly does not apply to all colleges but at the beginning of the period it certainly applied to a majority.

The interchange between teachers in the early days of the Project was very intense. It generated an excitement and a sense of belonging to a movement however vaguely defined which many teachers today recollect with nostalgia. The identification of good practice over a limited field and the bringing together of eager, usually young people committed to that practice could not but stimulate a wider movement. The analysis of the elements of that good practice by the advisory teachers and their suggestions for its furtherance and expansion were in turn bound to produce either a novel pedagogy which helped students who had previously failed or new models of courses whose style and relevance enabled such students to learn skills and display abilities they had been considered incapable of previously. Both processes have been set in train with some measure of success. The earlier successes fired the committed teachers with an almost evangelical fervour, and caused one principal to characterise the time as one when "the Gospel according to St. Eric had been imbibed until milk was flowing out of everybody's ears so that we had communications workshops in a big way and indeed some people thought that Appendix II meant communications workshops; it only dawned on them later . . . perhaps there were other things to think about."

There is an element of irony in that the enthusiasm generated by the Project's activity projected its thinking in an apparently dogmatic fashion when most of its own statements in writing can be seen as highly tentative. They have always been hedged by clear statements of the limited situations in which they were intended to apply and of the restricted immediate goals they were designed to attain. Moreover the Project members themselves have been slow to push the wider implications of their thinking in spite of the fact they are well aware that much of it has a clear and immediate relationship to the pedagogics favoured by BEC and long-run possibilities for other sectors of further education. Nevertheless the earlier exuberance of the Project's "evangelistic" phase especially within the network has created the myth of what one head of department—a historian—has christened the orthodox doctrine.

While the advisory teachers themselves and the staff inspector and his colleague concerned would not have chosen these words to describe their thinking in this way, outside observers in the colleges can perceive what seems to them a relatively coherent structure of thought which is subscribed to by most of the advisory teachers.

Section 2—The Orthodox Principle

What is the true gospel "according to St Eric"? Is the essence of the orthodoxy the provision of institutional innovations such as the workshops along with their workshop strategy? Wherever the advisory teachers and the group that preceded them began in their thinking, it soon progressed beyond the stage of believing that all that was required was an elaborated form of teaching aid, even if they were ever confined within such a concept. At one time it is true there seemed to be a certain dogmatic insistence on the workshop, as an almost sacramental symbol. The Project attempted to sell the communications workshop to the agencies with which it was working on certain developmental aspects with the hope that validating or funding bodies would insist that unless the college had a workshop it could not be allowed to run the course—for example, the CGLI *Communications Course* or TSD *Preliminary Courses.* With the TSD their efforts met with some success but with the CGLI and RSA although those officers dealing with the Project designing the course were not unsympathetic to the idea of communication workshops they are essentially examining and not validating bodies and their method of control of what happens in the colleges can only be through the examination itself and the forms of assessment used. If a candidate can meet requirements of the examining body by an alternative route he cannot be prevented from presenting himself for assessment and the award of a certificate.

The forms of assessment therefore must be consonant with the teaching strategies considered desirable and it is the teaching strategy rather than the physical means employed to implement it or the location in which it takes place that these examinations effectively stimulate. Thus the "orthodoxy" has never been restricted to "workshops" as such but rather workshops are to be seen as an expression of the workshop strategy which is itself an outcome of a set of more fundamental concepts. As there has never been an official statement as to what those concepts are which has been endorsed by the whole Project anyone who attempts a formulation is open to challenge. Nevertheless from extensive discussions with members of the Project and from examination of the documentation they have produced one might identify the following main lines of thinking that run through their activity:

First, the development of autonomy on the part of a learner, making him responsible for his own learning;
Secondly, the establishment of an alternative range of learning objectives to those normally posed in academic work, derived from real life and matched against the learner's needs and personal learning agenda;
Thirdly, an experiential learning programme, leading to the interpretation and simulation of experience as a basis for action;
Finally, consequential change in the role of the teacher and the teaching function.

These principles, while they may in this formulation appear not entirely novel to students of curricular theory, have not been taken over from books about the ideal curriculum and set as distinct objectives to the work of the Project. They have emerged with increasing clarity from its work with other teachers. Like much innovatory activity in other sectors of education—as widely separated as management education and the primary school—thinking has begun with the practical problems of communication and from the paradoxical findings of good practice it has moved towards a consideration of the curriculum as a whole. It is a journey which cannot yet said to be complete, it may even be a journey that can never be completed.

Advisory teachers discussing what they see as the main planks in their thinking tend to start from their origins in the emphasis the Project places on the distinction between the teaching of communication *skills* and the teaching of English and in particular the emphasis on "listening and talking".

"The productive skill of writing is frequently used extensively in educational settings. Speaking is used frequently in classrooms, whereas in social situations communicating by speech is most frequent and writing is used much less."[1]

Thus what the communication the Project is concerned with is an effective communication that actually gets things done, that has effects on and through other people and that is capable of responding to the needs or initiatives of others. Its methods are necessarily concerned with the direct experience of the students externally or produced within the communications workshop.

This special concern with communication skills has led the Project to a curricular approach that has much in common with the pedagogy favoured by BEC. Whatever view we take of the learning strengths of the students—they may be quite limited learning strengths—most students do seem to respond to a learning content which is about something which they can apply. They learn by doing things, by interacting and by getting some kind of result.

For teachers this poses problems of organisation and problems with the expectations of their colleagues, contradicting a lot of teachers' assumptions about how teachers should operate. A lot of teachers are in a kind of schizophrenic stage where they know what to subscribe to but that is often at serious variance with what they actually do and the variance may not be always noticed by the teachers themselves.

"It seems to me that the curriculum approach of the Project is about supporting teachers who do get into this contradictory position in relation to their normal curricular practice and helping teachers, encouraging teachers, to do better, by helping them to become more aware of the gap between what they hope to do and what actually comes out in their practice."

A central element in making these teachers aware and in improving their mode of operating has been the development of the course team.

"If you look at the resources of the Project, you see they are strictly limited and it is the interaction of teachers with *other teachers* that is its greatest strength, not the interaction of teachers with the advisory teachers—they are too few and far between. If you look at the network and the intensity of its activity on in-service courses—right into the night on many occasions—you can see the dedication that produced the network, and one of its operational forms is the course team."

The importance of the course team in the Project's thinking is matched by the significance with which some principals and other senior members of the further education establishment view it.

"If you have teams for courses which are to that degree integrated," said one of them, "you are beginning to set up, or at any rate to reinforce, a different mode of operating both in terms of curriculum and teaching strategy. It has been embryonic in further education all along, because there has always been the contrast between the "packaged" course of the technical and business pattern, and the single-subject courses at 'O' and 'A' level of the academic pattern. The big divide between school and FE largely turns on the "package" concept. The package concept, however, has never been fully exploited because within the package each teacher has to operate as a single-subject teacher. The English person may be a part-time teacher whose whole experience is remote from business studies and who teaches about participles and full-stops and commas. But what is now happening in this Project and in BEC—and perhaps to a less marked extent in TEC—is to assert the integrating quality of the package course. A new principle is operating in which members of the course team in sharing their experience with each other change their relationship with their students and the students begin therefore to have a different kind of learning environment. The continuity of thinking between the Project and that of the innovators in BEC especially in relation to course teams seems to me to be very important."

An advisory teacher explained the mechanisms by which this change was wrought in an individual teacher:

"If you've got a teacher who's got a glimmering he ought to be doing something a bit different, he doesn't want to face the fact that what he's usually doing is wrong, and that what he ought to be doing means changing the learning environment and instituting changes which many colleagues won't understand and approve. How much disapproval can the average teacher stand?

"What the psychological value of the course team amounts to, is that it can redefine what is normal, what's to be expected and what you can ask your colleagues to identify as good practice. It shields the individual from the full might of incomprehension and disapproval that a college can administer—and that can be very crushing."

Section 3—Skills Based or Knowledge Based?

The "orthodox" doctrine propounded by the project may appear pretty radical and not at all orthodox to observers from outside, especially those who are themselves not directly involved in education. Its emphasis on skills, rather than subjects, context rather than content, work as a goal, the concept of the negotiated agreement between learner and teacher, the progressive move towards learners becoming responsible for their own learning, the significance given to collaborative activity between teachers in the course team, and the result of all these elements, a substantial modification in the teacher's role—all that would seem to add up to an approach radically different from that traditionally adopted on most further education courses.

From the standpoint of the Project a counterview that stresses content rather than skills, that ignores or underestimates the significance of context, that dismisses the concept of negotiation as unrealistic and ignores or pours scorn on the claim that the Project's approach can lead students to accept responsibility, will appear far less "radical", even "conservative". The irony lies in the fact that while this counterview is supported by a number of teachers on purely educational grounds it also counts among its most active supporters those who see the emphasis on communication skills as a mode of taking the real teeth out of general studies teaching, disarming the young worker, and abolishing or reducing the importance of the teacher. "Behind the talk of skills (communication skills, thinking skills, generic skills, life skills) looms the reality of industrial de-skilling, the shadow of Frederick Taylor's intelligent gorilla".[2]

One of the leaders in the attack on so called "skill-based" courses takes one of the advisory teachers to task for making the distinction between "education" and "schooling" (a distinction derived ultimately from anthropology). This distinction it is argued, is made "to define the area of life with such teachers are properly concerned (schooling) in such a way as to move the moral issues entailed in the concept of education from its centre to the periphery. In effect, he is saying "take whatever view you like of the final aims of education; don't think about it at all if you don't want to; our job is to get on with schooling." The object is to manoeuvre us into a position where the only debate can be about technique."[3]

In the debate about technique this writer sharply attacks the emphasis on communication skills. "If you persist in applying the notion of skilled communication, you do three things. First, you split it off from thought. Second, you make it vulnerable to all those mechanising, automatising, alienating forces which are even now cutting the skill out of manual crafts. Third, you open up the possibility of making thought too into a skill."[4]

The concept of a workshop to replace a classroom is also under attack. "It is much easier to tell an employer that "his" apprentices spend their college day in a workshop getting skills than to tell him that they have spent it in a classroom reading. But this does mean you have to jettison a few liberal formulas. For example—(the advisory teacher) says he sets a certain value on reflection in the classroom. Of course, reflection does not have to be meditation, there is every reason for linking it as closely as possible to action. But isn't there a very serious danger that in these workshops the students will be occupied at every moment with tasks which are too integrate in form for the minds to wander (as some repetitive manual jobs permit) yet too shallow in content to connect with their real concern?"[5]

It is of course possible that some teachers would use workshops in this way—in fact, one of the difficulties causing concern to the advisory teachers is that they are only advisory and when they come across examples of the abuse of workshops, their repertoire of responses is limited if the teacher concerned is unwilling to accept their advice. They would argue that to single out the concept of skills and the question of workshops from the total context of their thinking is to change the meaning of both. What their critics see as inconsequential or unrelated and identify as the whole of their thinking they would regard as integral to a much wider body of thought which their critics do not discuss.

In spite of the heat generated in meetings or by pressure groups, the actual practice of the best teachers within the orthodox or heterodox strains is surprisingly close. They differ less from each other than from those, nominally their ideological allies, who are unable to establish effective relations with their students and adopt a simple didactic transmission mode of instruction whether they are supposed to be in the one camp or the other.[6]

One of the teachers who might be classified as heretical had some very thoughtful comments to make about his version of the variant of the "social and life skills syllabus" that he and some others had worked on at Isledon and which was referred to earlier.

"I always describe it to the incoming students as a practical form of social studies. In other words we do want to emphasise the understanding of the social environment they are trying to relate to. It is not simply just a skills based activity. Our philosophy—if you like to call it that—is that competence is based on understanding—it couldn't be based on anything else. All the practical learning things are there—going out, travelling around on tubes and buses, and all the sort of thing which is so popular, but there are also the straightforward knowledge inputs. We do want them to understand the kind of society they are living in and how they relate to it, and that is what we base our teaching on."

Supporters of the orthodox line would also claim that they, too, are concerned with understanding, including the understanding of the ambient society. They, however, mistrust a didactic pedagogy as it manifestly has not succeeded with this category of young people so far in schools. What kind of pedagogy is favoured by teachers who reject the skills-based approach?

"Well, it could be a whole lot of things. Certainly there could be some straightforward transmission of some kind. There could also be use of films, videos, audio-visual aids, visits, use of work experience—getting them to relate to what they have actually experienced in the work situation, getting them to talk and write about it. You need to teach about work and the way work is changing. But you have to start with some sort of statement, so you start with what the kids are actually doing, the sort of machinery they are actually using, the kind of new machinery that is creeping into offices—and things like that. Then there is the whole experiential bit, the whole of getting people to discuss, talk, and go out and be autonomous and find their way around and ask questions and do interviews and things like that."

In that formulation the gap between the heretical line and the orthodox line seems to be closing rapidly. The stereotypes presented by each side—the orthodox line all repetition work as skills and no reflection, the heretical line all didactic transmission of facts without reference to practice—are clearly wide of the mark.

Skills alone will not allow a learner to cope with the practical problems of a culturally mixed society. But, as the experiences of the ITV programmes on the facts of immigration and the racial composition of our society shew, the presentation of facts, even in imaginative ways, does not guarantee that an audience would accept them. Whereas some students have been conditioned always to accept what teacher says, some other students have been conditioned by their situation to reject what teacher says and the problem that remains is "how do particular, individual students learn?"

The "heretic" summed up his position by saying: "I think it is a very false distinction between skills and knowledge—the two must be together," a point which was picked up and elaborated by another teacher, a most articulate practitioner of the orthodox line. "First we have to take a long cold, hard look at ourselves as a profession, whatever section of the education service we are in, and very, very clearly tell ourselves that education, whatever its form—whether it is knowledge, knowledge related to skills, skills pure and simple and so on—does not exclusively take place within our province. People as learners will find achievement and reach various steps of growth and development given certain circumstances in different environments other than the education service. I think that is a very salutary thought and we have to come to terms with it. For teachers it's very difficult particularly if you have been imbued with the in-philosophy of a three-year teacher-training experience, that if it isn't happening with you cosseted between four walls, within an establishment denoted as educational, then it can't be happening at all.

"Secondly the skills-based, work orientated type of course cannot function without a context and that context is related knowledge. We all need to get to grips with certain processes that are happening around us and to understand them. These processes may occur in the work place, in the community in which we live or in different aspects of our private lives. All of these processes are now subjected to much faster rates of change than at any earlier period. In that context of rapid change possession of intellectual tools and skills and the ability to use knowledge as a resource rather than a pure abstraction pursued for its own sake is quite crucial".

One could see that the two teachers quoted in the previous paragraphs might continue to have endless discussion and yet, in spite of their ideological differences, their work would not differ greatly in practice and were they on the same staff their activities might well complement each other.

The more vociferous statements against the 'skills-based" course (which increasingly begins to look like a stereotype several degrees removed from the reality of orthodox ILEA practice) on closer inspection may appear to have much more to do with the professional position of general studies teachers than the real needs of the students they teach.

It is alleged that renaming "general studies" as "general and communications studies" as TEC has done and requiring general studies to specify what they are doing "in terms of psychological domains—"psychomotor" "cognitive" and "affective" and the insistence on expressing everything in terms of behavioural objectives are practices that atomise the learning process. Worse, by putting everything in terms of what the student does (giving the appearance of a "student centred" approach), they mask the extent to which the teacher (eg in a general studies discussion) actively promotes dialogue; thus they may form the first steps towards the abolition of the teacher as a skilled worker."[7]

In the sense that the Project's thinking carried to its logical conclusion does substantially affect the teacher's role, this is a valid point. The opposition are quite clear in asserting teacher-control of the process, which from the Project's point of view means a teacher-dominated curriculum. The Project would assert the desirability of learner-control but the opposition denounce this as a sham because the learner is powerless to achieve such control.

In this debate it is possible to invoke the same expert evidence to support both sides of the argument:

> "What is a communication workshop if not a descendant of the language lab? People have been practising and teaching the famous "four skills"—reading, writing, talking and listening—more or less well for years, but it is only now that the term "communication" is flung at us from all sides. Those who do so have, knowingly or unknowingly, borrowed their jargon of "inputs", "messages", "transmitters" and so on from cybernetics. It conceals a deep fear of what Jerome Bruner has called "idiosyncrasy, surprise and the inevitable raucousness that goes with freedom—the very qualities general studies is all about."[8]

Jerome Bruner can also be called as a witness in the defence of the skills approach, but before doing so two points are worth noticing in the previous quotation. "Communication" is not a recent arrival in the discussion of what is the appropriate curriculum on low level courses. The phrase "communication skills" made its bow in the Ministery of Education pamphlet "General Studies in Technical Colleges" published in 1962 and has been with us ever since. What is instructive, however, is that the "skills" were listed in the pamphlet in the order "speech and writing, listening and reading", ie the productive skills first, the receptive skills after. The Project consistently lists the skills ontogenetically "listening, talking, reading, writing," which is the order in which we normally acquire them. The writer quoted above, ranks the skills in a typical teacher's order; "reading and writing, talking and listening" and listening, in some ways the most neglected and yet the primary skill, comes at the end.[9]

Jerome Bruner in his essay "Education as a Social Invention" displays none of this squeamishness about the use of the word skill that affects opponents to the ILEA Curriculum Developments Project's thinking and the CGLI course 772.

He states categorically:

> "it is when the society goes beyond those relatively primitive techniques that the less spontaneous instruction of school must be relied upon. At this point the culture comes to rely upon its formal education as a means of providing skills. And insofar as there have been any innovation in tools or in tool using (taking those expressions in their broadest sense) the educational system is the sole means of dissemination—the sole agent of evolution if you will."[10]

Again a little later on in considering what should be taught:

> "It would seem from our consideration of man's evolution, that the principal emphasis in education should be placed on skills—skills in handling, in seeing and imaging, in

symbolic operations, particularly as these relate to the tehnologies that have made them so powerful in their human expression."[11]

He also has a comment on context:

"But a theory of instruction which must be at the heart of educational psychology, is principally concerned with how to arrange *environments* (my emphasis FDF) to optimise learning to various criteria—to optimise transfer or retrievability of information, for example."[12]

And finally on the theory of instruction itself:

"One is struck by the absence of a theory of instruction as a guide to pedagogy—a prescriptive theory on how to proceed in order to achieve various results, a theory that is neutral with respect to ends but exhaustive with respect to means. It is interesting there is a lack of an integrating theory in pedagogy, that in its place there is principally a body of maxims."[13]

It would be most misleading to assume that Bruner would adopt a position on one side in this controversy. He would recognise similarities between things he has written and said over the years with items in the slowly emerging and increasingly coherent views of the Project. Whether he would approve of the actual practice in the colleges that follows their line of thinking is another question and it would be presumptuous to assume what his judgement would be.

CHAPTER 6

The Nature of the Provision—Strategies

Section 1—New Pathways

The work covered by the arrangements flowing from Appendix II of the reorganisation report falls into two parts—support for students in this category who in spite of the difficulties have embarked on the traditional pathways of education and, in the second place, the opening up of new pathways for those whose previous experience has beome a deterrent to most further educational ventures.

It is paradoxical that the traditional pathways find any takers at all from this constituency in view of their own accounts of how unsatisfactory they found the earlier stage of their education. Many of them conceive the GCE and certain recognized vocational courses as the only genuine forms of education leading to higher education, high-status jobs, and professional qualifications. To accept any other course would be to accept not only an educational judgment but a social judgment on themselves. Under parental or peer group pressure they may try for full-time GCE courses; or they may sometimes be successful in obtaining a job that carries with it day-release to a specific course, for example, a craft apprenticeship that will release to a CGLI course. In the past, colleges have had little option but to accept such students selected by employers on grounds acceptable to them and perhaps more relevant than criteria described purely in educational terms. But in the absence of any suitably designed alternative, such students have tended to be placed on the day-release courses regarded as appropriate to their employment.

The academic pathway is still less easy of access and even more demanding of support. For the great majority of the Appendix II category it is—at least in the initial stages—completely inaccessible even with support. There will always, however, be a few ugly ducklings, who, encouraged by sympathetic teachers and showing a devoted doggedness, battle their way up into higher education and graduate status. Such individuals—and most of the London colleges can point to examples—need to be identified early and to be given the maximum support.

The second aspect of ILEA's provision has been through a range of specially devised courses that start where the student is and make what the providers consider a realistic attempt at immediate help. Diverse in origin and concept, they present a variegated spectrum, reflecting their many different starting points. But just as an open fan may present a semicircle and as it is slowly closed all its many veins come to a single perpendicular, so the diverse pattern of courses is slowly moving towards a norm.

The first problem such courses have to face is the need to win acceptance, because they do not obviously fit any traditional mould. The approval of students and that of employers is to a considerable degree reciprocal. What finds favour with employers when they come to recruit will commend itself to many students; a steady stream of young people displaying the talents, qualities and skills sought after by employers will eventually commend at least the elements of vocational preparation that courses contain. This recognition is gained in the first place on a local, or at least a limited, basis.

Courses that seem only concerned to meet employment needs may prove as unacceptable as those general education courses that seem solely concerned with the student's personal development. Courses at each pole of the spectrum will lose support for rather different but complementary reasons and will prove equally culs-de-sac for students. Courses need to be seen as stages on a definable route—a point to which we return in a later section.

The establishment of courses that meet these requirements and that command the support of students within, and confidence in their validity without, is not an easy matter. Paradoxically, if their scope is local and there are elements such as work experience in which contact is made between the providing college and local industry or commerce, or the course itself has been established in cooperation with a body such as TSD or an ITB, they may win credibility more easily than less well-established alternatives such as CSE or, now, CEE. The residual problem left for the architects of such courses is how to prepare the students for the next step, at the same time as keeping their short-term limited objectives well in focus. Unless they can resolve it, and can guarantee the next step is a reality and already in place for those who wish to take it, these courses may fail to attract sufficient students to make them truly cost-effective.

A lot will turn on the nature of the immediate objectives, and it may be important whether these objectives are student-determined or teacher-determined, that is whether they are defined, by the situation of the student and his desire to obtain worthwhile while employment, or by the situation of the teacher and his natural inclination to work to an established syllabus which will lead to an assessment of performance by formal examination. A course of the first type will derive its "content" from the requirements of the actual job or area of employment the student is seeking to enter. What goes into the syllabus will be those things a student needs to know and understand in order to perform well in the workplace. These items will not be seen in terms of academic subjects but as sets of skills and bodies of information set firmly within a clear context and related to each other.

Herein lies a paradox. Appendix II students, for the reasons already given, need strong support, a firm frame and clear guidelines. The limited objective, a fairly specific context and a range of skills make for clarity and strong motivation. Yet, if courses are to lead to further development, those elements need so to be taught that they can be built on and so help the student move to more general understanding and application. Thus there is a strong attraction in a limited, realistic course (especially when it leads to success in terms of obtaining and holding a job). Yet for a number of reasons—motivational, social and political, and the desire not to waste real potential—there is a need for opening-up continuing opportunity for further development and promotion. This development may lie outside the college and beyond any possible control of the teacher and be, for example, in the firm or place of work. It adds a further long-term objective to any special course, that is, a need to prepare students for the opportunities that await them in the external world. One of the most useful functions of the ILEA curriculum development project in the long-term is its persistent exploration of the ways these short-and long-term objectives can be reconciled in the pattern of each of the course models with which they are concerned.

Section 2—Question of Structure

Physicists are well aware of the difficulties that arise when they depart from mathematical formulations of the behaviour of sub-microscopic phenomena. If they attempt to explain the situations and events they observe in ordinary language they are thrown back on analogies which can only cover at any one time some of the properties exhibited. At times they will refer to properties such as mass and velocity that suggest a phenomenon of the nature of a particle, and at others they will refer to properties that suggest that the subject of discussion more closely resembles a train of waves.

It is perhaps not too fanciful to draw an analogy between that situation and the manner the jargon term Appendix II is employed. It is sometimes used as if it referred to a whole population spread across a wide spectrum of college activity. At other times it seems to refer to a set of courses. To those ultimately responsible for the provision—members and officers—both descriptions are true facets of a total concept. At lower levels, in the colleges, convenience often leads to them being isolated from each other and, in consequence, distortion and misunderstanding creep in. The more diffuse use of the term, implying a population, calls for systems of support deployed across the college, available to students in this category, wherever they may be. The roots of at least some portions of the support systems need to lie within the special provision and there should be an organic connexion between both aspects of Appendix II activity within a college, especially if some students are going to move easily from the special courses on to other courses, whether full or part-time, within the college. Practice within the ILEA varies a good deal from college to college, though a growing number of principals and heads of departments are becoming aware of the nature of the difficulties and have gone some way towards resolving them.

The basic difficulty is endemic in further education and the ILEA spread of low-level work is revealing as to its full extent. It is the problem of matching the courses a college provides with the identified needs of the student. This, in turn, reduces to two aspects—the selection procedures that identify student need and the structure of courses and their organisation into departments.

This report is not the place in which to examine in detail the way in which college structure can distort or complicate certain kinds of development. The domination of the single subject, enshrined in examinations like CSE, GCE, and now CEE, is so absolute in the school sector that it is rarely questioned in the public mind or in discussions of the curriculum like the so-called Great Debate. Schools are therefore largely structured on a basis of subject departments. The vocational nature of the original courses in further education has led to a different form of structure in which the departments tend to be concerned with a broad band of studies, for example, engineering, commerce and business studies, catering, and general education. The appearance of general education as a separate category has led in further education to a resurgence of the importance of subjects. In the old London day colleges, when in the early 1960s there was a gradual spread of more senior posts, they tended to attract subject responsibility and the structure tended to resemble that of schools. This was a natural development in view of the very large component of GCE 'O' level work, full and part-time, that made up the main body of each college's work. Where engineering courses existed, or secretarial courses, they tended to be structured into self-contained packages with few, if any options, and confined to their departments which were sharply marked off from the rest of the college. In the general education departments, there was a tendency for flexibility, options and an emphasis on subject choice to be the rule. The structural differences reinforced differences of interest between departments and led to a mild level of tension between them. The mergers and the consequential sorting out of the work, coinciding as they did with the development of new types of work and more integrated courses, not only in the Appendix II field but most noticeably in the BEC proposals for a new pattern of courses, has intensified the tensions between different types of departments and different forms of organisation.

There are no easy resolutions of the difficulties arising from conflicting purposes and different conceptions of how to organise academic provision. Whether one favours a matrix pattern, a faculty system, a system of large self-contained departments—mini-colleges in fact—each solution brings its own problems. Each college needs to find a workable solution for itself, but changing a college structure is unlikely to produce of itself a resolution of the difficulties. A study of the structure and an appreciation of its nature and the assumptions that support it can lead to an understanding of the kind of obstruction that a particular structure may present to the different forms of college activity. Reflection on the structure and its effects can then lead to the formulation of what strategems to devise to circumvent those obstructions.

The absence of any organisational panacea for general application should not blind one to the disturbing effects of particular structures and one of the weaknesses of the authority's approach in fostering low-level work has been its complete ignoring of the effects of different structural forms. The resulting divergence in physical context creates a difference in the significance in one college from the significance in another of items that superficially appear the same. One of the new course models generated by the curriculum development project—the RSA *Vocational Preparation (Clerical Skills)* course—is placed in some colleges in general studies departments and in others in business studies departments. There is a danger that wherever it is placed the current departmental ethos—the expression of the basic assumptions of most of the teachers in the department—will influence the way the objectives of the course are interpretated and deflect it from some of its original purposes. This is already a matter of concern and investigation.

Two features of the situation may help to retain the original balance and keep the work on course—one, a well-integrated course team under the effective leadership of a course tutor and, the other, the activity of the senior lecturer (Appendix II) and behind him the vice-principal concerned with this area of work, if they are fully alerted to the dangers and possibilities within the situation.

The main safeguard is understanding by those responsible for the work. The apparent lack of understanding of the significance of structures that would appear to permeate the inspectorate and perhaps the officers of authority is something of a threat to the work. Just as "subject interests" lie at the root of much departmentalism in the colleges, so the same "subject interests" find expression within the authority's inspectorate and the clash of interests has had something of an inhibiting effect on the spread of the work. There is fruitful co-operation between the inspectors involved in business studies and in construction with those responsible for the work of the ILEA Curriculum Development Project and the Appendix II area generally. That co-operation must extend to the same degree and with the same warmth to other sectors of the inspectorate if, in the colleges, courses in other technical and vocational fields, paralleling the existing models, are to come into effective existence.

Section 3—Selection and Enrolment

College structure not only has an effect upon the way courses are conceived and where they are placed but also in the way that student need is identified. A department that has a strongly held conception of its function and responsibilities in relation to the disciplines it serves may tend to reject automatically students whose profiles do not match their stereotypes. If all departments have firm stereotypes for the student on "their" courses, how is the Appendix II student who finds himself on such a course—either because he talked his way in, or his employer sent him—to survive in situations parallel to those that defeated him at school. The college may be prepared to supply special help and support but how is he to be identified? And if he is identified at the initial interview or at enrolment, will the department have second thoughts about his suitability and reject him?

Even in a sympathetic college with helpful heads of departments the clear identification of student-need presents difficulties. A student may apply for a full-time 'O' level course or be sent by his employer for a CGLI craft course or a BEC general course. How does one identify among the applicants those for whom one of the Appendix II courses would be more suitable? Or perhaps even more difficult, how does one when recruiting identify those students who, given the right kinds of tutorial and academic support, will be able to survive on a traditional course and even profit greatly from it? What is an Appendix II student, in other words? And how do we spot him?

This is the moment at which the sobriquet begins to become much less useful than it has been. The original Appendix II clearly includes the general studies content of operative craft and technician courses as one main aspect of its field of reference; the other main aspect is that of full-time general education courses. But in the colleges, particularly colleges with a large technical component to whom general education is to a large extent a newly-arrived responsibility, the term is differently defined.

In one such college which had a large body of craftwork with day-release students who (in the authority's view) could be included in the Appendix II population, the term was reserved for general education courses. Its principal told me:

"Within this college, Appendix II means "general education" and "general education" students are very much disadvantaged: generally speaking they are academically at a lower level than the others."

It is instructive to compare this view with that of another principal. He gave as his view the definition of Appendix II:

"I think the crucial question as to what Appendix II means arises if you ask the question, 'What function does the senior lecturer (Appendix II) have in respect of a department exclusively engaged in teaching GCE 'A' level science courses?'

"As far as I am concerned I am willing to take a bet with anybody that within a group of 200 full-time 'A' level science students there are going to be some people who need special help. As far as I'm concerned 'special help' is the name of the Appendix II game and the skill of the principal, the vice principal and the senior lecturer concerned is to identify where the special help is needed, what the special help should be and then to secure a means of delivery.

"That may simply mean telling a department that it ought to have a better tutorial system; it may mean more than that; it may mean noting that you're getting a highly cosmopolitan community around college; whether they count in the ILEA and DES books as overseas students or not, a lot of our so-called home-based students were not born in this country and not born of Caucasian parentage and there is a considerable area of linguistic background that needs sorting out."

Just as the Appendix II policy is a policy of the authority, but it is implemented by decisions taken at college level, so this principal sees a college Appendix II policy being implemented at the departmental level but its implementation being monitored by the senior lecturer (Appendix II) supported by the authority of one of the vice-principals.

This system works effectively if there is clarity on the part of the principal and other senior staff of the college, but where there is uncertainty about (or lack of understanding and sympathy for) the body of low-level work; departments may have widely divergent interpretations about which of their students need support and what kind of support that might be. In such cases it becomes convenient for Appendix II to be seen increasingly as "courses" and less as "a population". In such a situation the nature of the enrolment procedures a college adopts becomes a matter of some import. Enrolment is essentially a responsibility of each college and the authority has not expressed a view upon the procedures to be adopted, except on such local matters as the way in which fees should be paid, the level of fees and similar administrative matters. The only exceptions are its regulations about the recruitment of overseas students and its very strictly imposed regulations that all applications by or on behalf of young people below the statutory school-leaving age must be immediately referred to the authority's officers without even any preliminary discussion.

These is a wide range of good and bad practice not only between college and college but also between departments within a college. The logic of the Appendix II policy, acknowledging the existence of a population needing special help as well as a body of special courses, suggests that good practice would point towards the adoption of a coherent and consistent college system, even though there may be variations for special cases. A college system would not necessarily be an inter-departmental system for all courses, nor would it necessarily mean the recruitment of students to the college rather than to a department. A consistent system is one where (whether the recruitment of all or some of the courses is central, or whether the recruitment to some is central, to others departmental, or even whether it is all departmental), the same practices and the same criteria are equally applied and there is common agreement about the nature of special help available and the circumstances under which it is applied.

In the absence of a coherent, consistent system, divergent practice means that even in the same college, students in the Appendix II category may end up on an appropriate course, or with appropriate support, or on any course without any help, or be rejected with no alternative offered. Their fate will turn on the lucky or unlucky chance of what department they apply to and what member of staff interviews them.

Ironically, students sent by employers for day-release will have usually a much easier time. Employers will have decided the level of work the students will be engaged in and they will expect the college to supply appropriate education. If a college raises too many difficulties, an employer in the London area can usually find another college prepared to take his students. In many colleges students are tested. Occasionally, on the results of the tests, recommendations about an alternative placing are made to employers; more commonly tests are used to stream students into broad bands of approximately equal achievement, though the results of the testing carried out among past students by the ILEA Research and Statistics Group (reported earlier in Chapter 3) indicates that whatever the theory of the matter, in practice there would appear to be a very wide spread of ability and achievement in most craft classes.

The ILEA Curriculum Development Project is, as part of its ongoing activity, continuing to look at the related topics of selection, assessment and employability. It rightly sees that the three topics are linked and the more scrupulous we are about the selection and placements of students on courses, the more careful we need to be in accurately monitoring what their real achievement is. Such a programme is sound both on educational grounds and grounds of cost.

Section 4—Strategies of Support

The chances of success for Appendix II students, whether they have been enrolled on the standard courses offered by the college or newly-designed courses tailored to meet their special requirements, will be greatly enhanced where distinct strategies have been deployed to support their activity. Three such strategies call for special attention. They all had their origins in the colleges for further education before the mergers of 1973, all were encouraged and their development specially funded by the authority and, while two have figured prominently in the thinking of the Curriculum Development Project, the third has so far been treated more cautiously. They can be classified as

- a. The Workshop Strategy
- b. The Orientation Towards Work
- c. Personal Support.

a. The Workshop Strategy i. Theory

The most notable form of academic support has been the development of the communication and numeracy workshops. In the late sixties one college appointed a Lecturer Grade II with the task of "remedial language training" who worked either on a 1 : 1 basis or in small groups. Her remit was a very limited one, not directed to the improvement of the general levels of linguistic accomplishment of students on low-level courses, but to helping to deal with individual special problems such as the functional illiteracy that affected a small proportion of the total body of the students and the dyslexic behaviours that could wreck the examination success of students who were otherwise potential high achievers.

The first communications workshop was established at City and East London College in 1972. The member of staff at the time responsible for General Studies, Patricia Haikin, wrote in a report to the principal: "It is customary to assume that the motivation for language work from these students must lie in the content or vehicle one uses to achieve the motivation; we are not convinced that motivation may not be achieved through the student's desire to master a skill in which he is deficient. Consequently, along with materials designed to stimulate and to provide "flashpoints" we are investigating a more heavily structured, programmed-learning approach, geared to individual needs and making use of the language laboratory and language workshop to achieve this. One of the biggest teaching problems presented by lower-level craft classes is the range of achievement and of ability within them. Class-teaching often appears a wasteful use of the very limited time available and the use of individual diagnosis and language programmes is possibly more effective. the technology can provide its own motivation."[1]

The butterfly is just emerging from its chrysalis. It has not yet broken the connexion with the language laboratory and "heavily structured programmed learning" and the technology is seen as a possible motivation. Yet the imaginative developments out of this situation which have since taken place are all present in embryo.

Once the concept of the language workshop had been fed into the ILEA's Curriculum Development Project in Communications Skills, the development of an elaborated workshop strategy was under way. As that project came to establish its Tuesday training sessions at the Isledon Teachers centre at Highbury, materials suitable for use in communication workshops began to be elaborated as collaborative projects between teachers. In this situation the advisory teachers attached to the project played a catalytic role and in the light of their experiences, as workshops were established in college after college, they proceeded to elaborate an increasingly sophisticated strategy for their use. It would be unrealistic to suggest that all the colleges that had workshops have used them precisely in the way they were envisaged by the architects of the ruling concepts.

One of the advisory teachers has identified the main principles of the workshop strategy as being:

"i. Students set their own pace;
ii Students plan their own programmes on an understanding of their own needs and interests;
iii Students use language:
  a. to cope with simulated situations highlighting various skills and combinations of skills;
  b. to solve problems;
  c. to find things out;
  d. to gain and maintain cooperation in the carrying out of tasks;
iv. Students use, develop and extend their *existing* language skills;
v. Students can get help from the teacher or from other students, as and when they require it;
vi. Students experience success, not failure, at each stage;
vii. Students assess their own performances (and each other's) in terms of "effective communication";
viii.Students keep their own work records and chart their own progress."[2]

A key concept in the development of the workshop strategy is that of communicative competence. No-one performs equally well in dealing with all the situations in which he is required to communicate. Our performance is affected by our own state of mind, whether we understand what is said to us or what we read, we may find it difficult to select, abstract and organise the items or to compose an effective statement in speech or writing that is appropriate to the occasion. A document published by the curriculum development project says:

"The theory of comunication is contained in the paradigm—WHO says WHAT to WHOM in WHAT SITUATION for WHAT PURPOSE and by WHAT MEANS?

"Communicative competence is indicated by performance. Competence in this sense means 'adequate and effective'. Communicative 'performance' is executed in non-verbal ways (gesture, positioning, etc) as well as verbally through language. In this paper we are looking at the language elements of communication.

"Communication is a 2-way process; a speaker communicates to a listener, a writer to a reader.

"Communication is a process executed through receptive and productive skills. The receptive skills of listening and reading are of high frequency in classrooms.

"The productive skill of writing is frequently used extensively in educational settings. Speaking is used less frequently in classrooms, whereas in social situations communicating in speech is most frequent and writing is used much less. Moreoever, in educational situations, a student's performance in subject learning is frequently examined and assessed through the written forms of language.

Speaking is the skill most directly related to innate communicative competence. Performance in the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing is influenced by previous experience. This experience is shaped by previous educational and social contacts.

"Whenever we communicate in language we are making choices—choices in the sound we make (stress, intonation, enunciation), in the individual words we use, and in the organisation of those words through syntax and cohesion.

"To perform competently in a situation the choices which make our meaning clear to the receiver of the message will have to be adequate and effective for that situation. Here the notion of 'appropriateness' is linked to the choices we make, since we generally perceive that the language we use is related to the situation in which it is being used, as well as to the purposes of the communication; eg it is unlikely that we will be making the same 'choices' from our repertoire of langage when talking to a close relative or friend as when talking to a stranger or an official."[3]

Another document explains the relevance of these concepts to the strategy:

"Two kinds of analysis have been applied:

i. *A ROLE/SITUATION ANALYSIS* of the student
  a. as an individual citizen
  b. as a student
  c. as a worker
ii. *A SKILLS ANALYSIS* under the heads of
  a. listening
  b. speaking
  c. reading
  d. writing
  e. numeracy skills
  f. study and thinking skills

"These analyses are rather less rudimentary when they are used together than when they are used separately. They enable one to build a grid upon which a profile of the student's needs can be constructed.

"At this stage it becomes possible to plan provision and teaching systematically.

"In course planning, judgments

have to be made about the context of the use of the communication skills. For some students (eg general education) it is sensible to put the emphasis on context where personal need and public role coincide (student as citizen). For other students (eg craft courses), it is sensible to put the emphasis on skills for study purposes (student as a student). In some business studies courses the main advantage may well lie in the area of student as (office) worker. However, this is a matter of general orientation rather than of rigid rules. Individual students may well have interests and preferences which should be taken into account and a well-provided workshop will be able to reflect individual needs and wishes. A good course is an individually-tailored course operating in the common ground between authentic situational requirements and individual learning susceptibilities."[4]

The strategy requires a high degree of teacher-expertise in at least three areas. An advisory teacher identifies these as:

"Diagnosis
The teachers need to be able to identify students' problems, not once and for all by test, but continuously from student performances in the workshop.

"Teaching Repertoire
The teachers need to be able to find and/or devise suitable teaching materials to meet a wide range of teaching needs. Materials in the workshop need to be based on an accurate anticipation of learning contingencies and they need to be available in plentiful quantities. It is important that workshop teachers should be conversant with large stocks of material and understand what they can (and what they cannot) be used for. Teacher-expertise in the *use* of material is improved by experience in *making* and *revising* materials.

"Management of a Complex Learning Situation and Environment
Individualised learning requires a method which the students must learn to observe and operate. They become more teacher-independent, but this only occurs if the workshop is intelligibly organised and efficiently run."[5]

The emphasis upon skills has misled some critics into believing that the strategy resembles the skills used in teaching a modern language through a language laboratory. Nothing could be further from the truth. The skills not only are not, but cannot be, taught in isolation and must always be taught within a context. This is a concept that has been present from the beginning and a statement in a very early document emanating from City College has hardly been bettered:

"It is obviously undesirable to teach skills divorced from a meaningful context. As both our aims and objectives are rooted in the reality of everyday life, it was only logical to suppose that our course structure, both in content and in form, must reflect this. As our emphasis is on the student's development of an ability consciously to control a situation without dependence upon an intermediary to perform for him, the core of the course had to provide the student with a tangible whole situation into which he could project himself realistically and within which he and his tutor could find some measure of his communicative competence. The skills objectives must be constantly fed into a graded series of whole situations."

The Workshop Strategy ii. Physical Setting

One of the advisory teachers described to me the physical make-up of a communication workshop:

"A communication workshop is a large room, the largest you can possibly find, and it is distinct from a classroom in that the furniture is arranged in such a way that it is mobile and can be changed to fit into different patterns of working for the students. They can be working on their own in a booth with a tape recorder, or they can be working in pairs, or they can be working in small groups, say of four or even six. You need to be able to vary this and over a period of two hours students may change from one pattern to another. The communication workshop also gives the opportunity for people to do something all together so that at any time, if the teacher feels that something is happening which is of interest to all of them (or if she feels that the point she wants to put over would be done more economically by everybody having a ten-minute input all together) she can stop everyone and have a whole-class session.

"The communication workshop is different from a classroom in that it is flexible to a variety of teaching strategies; it can supply what the classroom can supply and it can supply many other things as well.

"The essence of the workshop is that it's an environment—a whole environment—in which you could have as many resources as possible for a variety of different kinds of learning needs, and that also it caters at one time for people of variable needs and allows them individually to pursue those needs. So the physical workshop—the setting up of a mobile work unit in terms of table and chairs, is actually facilitating the kind of strategy that you require for the flexible learning situation. As far as hardware is concerned, you need a filing system for student work which they usually keep in folders. You need a set of Lawco boxes or something which will keep the packaged material or the worksheet material. You need bookshelves, magazine racks, you need places on the walls where you can put up maps and posters and pictures; you need, perhaps, an area where you have a quiet reading corner, where you have your bookshelves and magazine rack; and you have it sheltered so that people can work quietly; you need facilities for the use of tape recorders, cassettes, with earphones and microphones; you need, if possible, video equipment, and that means both being able to show material and being able to make it. This might be in the workshop itself or in the media resources area, but you must be able to use it wh[illegible] you need it.

"It's useful to have typewriters as well because some students with difficulties—with bad handwriting for instance—do find it helpful to learn to type, not to become typists but to be able to see what they have written in neat form. Often the use of the typewriter will help them get over a number of their difficulties. You need an internal telephone system for taking and receiving messages. It is useful not only for students to practice how to use a telephone but because the telephone contains a lot of language possibilities. People who are listening to someone on a phone and can't see them, often have difficulty getting tuned into what they are hearing without any visual signals. I find this is very useful for students from different language backgrounds. For instance, putting someone with a Turkish Cypriot background to work with someone from Asia. It enables them to get tuned in to different varieties of aural English. There's also the possibility of using the phone set for transferring what you hear into written form. You can get students to take down messages in a note that is intelligble to someone else for them to act on.

"You need a set of telephone directories, both the London areas and the Yellow Pages. You need maps, like the underground maps and the "A-Z", and maps of the rest of the country, or even the rest of the world that they can work on, because going out and about is an important thing for a lot of students to learn to do and therefore the reading of maps is important.

"A camera is useful because you send people out to make surveys, perhaps with a rover video, perhaps with a cassette tape recorder, and all these facilities within the workshop, I think, are necessary to present the view that you're looking to the outside world. The workshop is a base where they work, but what they're working at should be looking to the outside world, to their adult life, to their working life, to their needs outside. That's why I think of it as a three-sided room that is opening up—first of all to what is in the college, which they can expand on, the library and so on, and then to what is in the community and to work itself."

To function effectively as a teacher in a communication workshop and to operate the strategy successfully requires not only considerable insight into the specific problems facing the individual student but a substantial repertoire of responses. The teacher may no longer stand at the blackboard and talk to the whole group, set them identical exercises, and correct them in the large group, but his lower profile does not mean the abandonment of his leadership role. He now has to exercise it more effectively from among the group rather than from the dais and he has to identify the particular assignments most appropriate to the student, set up and monitor the work of small groups, ensure that all skills—not just those of reading and writing—are being drawn upon and the individual needs of his students are being met. Some measure of training for this work is essential. One of the advisory teachers indicates that in her view it can only take the form of working alongside an already skilled practitioner in a workshop:

"I try to encourage heads of departments or senior lecturers, if they put in a new member of staff to work in a workshop—whether or not he's been teaching before—that it's highly benefical for that teacher to have one slot a week where he's actually teaching with an experienced workshop teacher in a team-teaching situation so that he can more or less assimilate the technique. It happens almost by osmosis, as you're working together. I think it's difficult to tell someone how to behave in a workshop and expect him to do it; it will happen more quickly if he's put with someone who's experienced."

A good deal of misunderstanding about the nature of communication workshops and what constitutes a workshop stategy exists among teachers who have no direct experience of these things. Two teachers declared the pupils on their courses did not use the communications workshop because they always had a teacher with them. These teachers had heard about "individualised learning" and imagined that the workshop was a place full of programmed learning machines which left no room for a teacher. In fact the teacher taking the language sessions on the courses for which they were responsible did deploy a workshop strategy, even though the physical conditions of the workshop left something to be desired. Similar confusions exist in other colleges and not all the workshops deploy the teaching strategy in precisely the way it has been conceived.

The advisory teacher quoted earlier offers her own explanation:

"Because we talked about autonomy and because we talked about students developing at their own pace, there's been a lot of misunderstanding about the value of interaction and about the teacher actually activating the students in situations where they have got to work things out for themselves or work things out with their peers. What I've seen a lot of is too much "back to paper" work individually. Doing the oral work is more difficult. It demands a lot more control over your hardware and things like that, setting up is more difficult, and it's much easier to have people sitting down working though worksheets quietly and you going from one to another. The most usual pattern is everybody having the worksheet and the teacher going round, which is, I suppose, one remove from the classroom situation, where you can't get round. At least they *are* working at their own pace. But I think it falls a great deal short of what a workshop is about because I feel a teacher should be activating it in such a way that students are taking over responsibility for their own work. The group interaction, doing things together, is much more educative than dependence upon the teacher."•

The suggestion that if the authority put up the necessary funding to establish the workshop, then there should be some way of insisting that teachers used it properly was scouted by the advisory teachers as unworkable. Firstly, they were very clear about their own role. One of them stated categorically "I don't see the role of advisory teachers is telling the teachers how to teach." His colleagues were also clear about the sheer impossibility of compelling teachers to operate in a given way against their will. They must be won for the strategy, but their previous training and experience may in the end be just too strong for some of them.

One of the advisory teachers gave an account of her experience in the college in which she was a senior lecturer (Appendix II). After the merger it was decided to extend workshop techniques to a building in which for many years a considerable number of old-fashioned subject-based general education courses had been running. The occasion of the introduction was a newly established TSD preparatory course, the initial funding of which allowed for the setting up of a workshop. The TSD course used it for 10 hours a week, which allowed another 25 or so hours for other courses. She herself went and taught on the site to encourage teachers on other courses to "be in a workshop for some of their time".

"But the impact on the teachers was very very slow. I believe it is now beginning to happen but this is three years later. What you're up against is teachers' own attitudes. Some of them may cotton on—it depends. But you can't push people. I don't think you can impose the kind of teaching people can do. We've had people in the workshop, for instance, who actually couldn't take it, and they've had to be taken out again. If they weren't standing in front of a blackboard in front of everybody they were totally unhappy and the only thing you can do is put them back in a classroom. . . ."

The establishment of relatively expensive new learning environments raises an important question of the control of their use. If the authority is putting a lot of money in setting up workshops so that they become installed in all the colleges and there is a way of using them that maximises their effect, to what degree is it possible or desirable for the authority to require the workshops to be used in the fashion for which they were designed?

The reply from the advisory teacher was unequivocal:

"I think the change in the learning environment has got to be supported by an enormous amount of in-service assistance in some way. For example, in the primary schools when they knocked down the walls and said we will have open-plan classrooms, just knocking down the walls didn't change the learning situation. What you did get was the kind of response my colleague was talking about, where the teachers couldn't cope with it. They had to get screens and screen themselves off.

"I do think you have to do the business about making it possible to change the learning environment by getting resources. You can't begin to do it unless you have got resources. But you need to learn from the open-plan classroom debacle that for some people it is such a disorientation of what they view as their role, it is so demanding, in the actual way you become the manager of the learning environment, that people require a lot of support. I think changes in further education will go through the same kind of stages. I think you'll need national level support to get the notions circulating around. You'll need local support within individual authorities, and I think you'll need on-site support."

It is possible to knock down a wall or set up a workshop by an administrative act and know it is going to cost money. The sum is finite and can be calculated with fair precision in advance. The difficulty with staff development and ensuring the right kind of staffing to cover and sustain a major change in the learning environment is that it is something of an open-ended commitment and because it deals with people it tends to be expensive. The benefits are in the main long-run. The expenditure takes place in the short-run and in times of acute economic pressure matching long-run benefits against short-run costs is always a problem. To those who are actively associated with the growth and development of the workshop strategy there can be absolutely no doubt not only of the important benefits being gained from the present set-up in the colleges but of its longer-term extension beyond the present field of operation in language teaching, even though their expressions of faith still tend to be a little tentative:

"You see, I always looked at it from two angles. . . . The business of workshop strategy to me is one thing; the business of the *language* workshop—like it being a language—is another thing. I see the strategy being beneficial for a variety of students, for a variety of subjects. An adult approach, if you like. To what extent that can happen—I know we're going into multi-skills workshops and that throws up a whole lot of difficulties—but it is the workshop versus the classroom that interests me."

It becomes a matter of some importance, if the workshop strategy is to continue to flourish in the colleges and to extend to other areas of the curriculum, to establish the degree of cost-effectiveness it achieves and to demonstrate in ways that will convince those reponsible to the electorate for running the educational service that the workshops and strategy do achieve what those of us who have seen them in action are already certain of, that those young people who found learning difficult—if not impossible—before, not only learn their immediate tasks but discover a path to further learning for which they can themselves be responsible.

b. Strategies of Support—The Orientation towards Work

The second strand that has emerged as a supportive strategy is the general orientation towards the world of work. Vocational courses have, at least nominally, always had such an orientation but even they have usually lacked a consideration of the more general features—inter-personal relations in the work place, the development of confidence to cope with an adult environment, the assessment of one's own skills and abilities and the matching of them against the tasks presented by the work situation.

A spectrum of activity—work experience, careers education, life and social skills, skills diagnosis—comprises this strand and some of these topics are discussed elsewhere in the text. The activities however, interrelate and, even if they are discussed separately here and are focussed on individuals in the work of the unit, in practice in the colleges in the most successful courses they fuse into an integrated pattern of activity. They manifest themselves not only where one would expect them—on vocational and pre-vocational courses—but in the more generalised activity of general education courses and to a growing extent within the GCE provision itself.

Three special features of this strand of activity call for special mention—i. the diagnostic activity represented by 'taster" courses, ii. multi-skills workshops and iii. the so called Holland pilot course.

i. Vocational Tasters

The concept of a vocational taster arose out of the experience of courses like the *'Which job?'* Course at City College. It was felt that while experience of work in general could be obtained through a normal work experience placement, suitable placements were often not available to give students the insight into a particular activity or skill which they might wish to pursue if only they had some initial inkling of what was involved.

In the merged colleges a much wider spectrum of vocational opportunity was already present in each college, but even so there seemed much to be gained by pooling college resources across the authority in order to give general education students an experience that would enable them to sample what certain types of work were really like. A working group of representatives from 9 London colleges met in 1975 over a period of several months and drew up a plan for a co-ordinated system of vocational taster courses for full-time general educational students to operate from September 1976. The occupational fields for such courses envisaged included:

Animal Care, Engineering (in appropriate forms), Fashion, Floristry and Horticulture, Furniture, Hair Care and Beauty, Hotel and Catering, Leatherwork, Nursery and Child Care, Office and Commercial Work, Printing, Retail and Distributive Trades.

The original proposal was that "instead of each college offering its own students only as wide a range of tasters as can be made available from its own course provision, the colleges should pool their resources. Such vocational taster resources will need to be specially tailored to the needs of full-time general education students; neither watered-down versions of existing technical courses for day-release students not replications of existing link courses for school children will be appropriate.

Success with tasters has been much more modest than originally envisaged. The inter-college pooling of resources has encountered—with a few notable exceptions—insuperable problems of time-tabling activities at mutually convenient times. There has been some misunderstanding on the part of the workshop teachers of the purpose of "tasters" and they have found it often difficult to adjust their teaching to the purpose of the taster and to the level of the students.

A head of general studies in one college in a paper on skill-sampling for the engineering board of study at college explained the 'taster' concept in this fashion:

"Vocational skill-sampling is an element in a pre-vocational course which aims to prepare the student for the world of work. The aim of the taster is to provide an experience in which the student can sample a range of basic skills related to a broad occupational area, eg engineering. It is assumed that the young person following the course is initially either vocationally undecided or vocationally unrealistic. The taster does not in itself aim to 'train' the young person but rather to assist him or her towards an understanding of his/her attitudes and interests within a purposeful vocationally-orientated environment. This may mean that a satisfactory outcome for the student is the recognition that he is not suited to a particular skill area. If this is the case there may be nonetheless two positive outcomes of the experience: the self-knowledge gained by the elimination of possible vocational routes and the acquisition of skills which although not to be pursued in the particular vocational context in which they had been learned, may be transferable to other contexts. On the other hand, if a young person, by self- and teacher-assessment, is considered to have an aptitude supported by interest and job opportunities within the vocational area sampled he may opt for further, specific vocational skills-training through taking up a job with day-release, enrolling on a full-time course, or taking a TSD short industrial course."[8]

Had the original scheme for a consortium of colleges proved successful providing between them a fairly complete range of skills and vocational activities that would allow students to sample what was involved in building, auto-engineering, clerical studies and so on, the incentive to develop multi-skills workshops might have been lacking.

That it was not entirely successful should not come as a surprise. A specialist teacher—whether of academic, technical or craft subjects—is not likely to be of much help to this constituency of relatively uncommitted students. Unless he has already had experience of them or has received some kind of special training, or he is a teacher of exceptional quality, he will be at a loss. Inside a course team, supported by a course tutor and the other members, specialist teachers may make their contribution relatively painlessly. Confronted with an unorthodox grouping with nothing but traditional support in a traditional setting, it is unlikely that an ordinary teacher will succeed.

ii. The Multi-Skills Workshop

The experiment with vocational tasters and the accompanying uncontrollable features have led to the development of the multi-skills workshop which may be able to achieve some of what the original grand inter-college taster scheme attempted.

Two or three colleges have already fairly well-developed multi-skills workshops and others are in the process of being equipped and set up. Some are still at the drawing board. The most elaborate set-up is a suite of workshops in the basement of one college, where there is a light crafts workshop, a general workshop, a manipulative skills workshop, and a retail and business workshop. This expansive provision allows a wide range of skill sampling on a number of different types of course. A general education, pre-vocational course run at this college is able to offer options within some eight major vocational areas which will permit the sampling of a number of skills within each area. The aims are strictly limited and the purpose of the activity is essentially diagnostic. In engineering craft, for example, the aim is stated as: "To develop students' dexterity in the handling of tools and practical problems, with a specific orientation to work in light engineering, electrical installation, plumbing and bricklaying. The students will work through a range of modules introducing them to the tools, materials, and basic skills involved in each area, in the context of practical activities." The modules include bricklaying, plumbing, electrical installations, light engineering. In general craft the aim is stated as: "To develop manual dexterity and perceptual skills over a wide range of craft activities, and in the design area in particular. To develop the skills which might be of use in light assembly work, printing, photography and the garment trades and in the home."

The set of multi-skills workshops are an invaluable asset in the design and presentation of such a course which would be immeasurably the poorer without them. Nevertheless, though their role is important it is a limited one. These workshops do not take over the function or purpose of specialist shops—the skills are not taught but only sampled. The technician who showed me round the light skills workshop in this college summed up the activities he officiated at in this way:

"What we're doing here is giving people a taster of these various skills and that's all it does really. It doesn't teach them how to build a wall. It gives them an idea which they hadn't had before of building, plumbing, car maintenance, electrical and so on and it teaches them to use hand tools. It gives them an idea perhaps, if they've no idea what to do. They may have various ideas about engines, for example, but do nothing about them. Here they work on engines, and they suddenly realise they've a little bit of a flair for the work and they'd rather like to do it. It's a first step."

The staff inspector responsible for the curriculum development project believed that a much clearer diagnostic use of the workshop was called for. He said: "I don't think the multi-skills workshops are being used nearly enough for diagnostic purposes or, if they are being used, they're being used rather superficially for it and I don't think that even the most sophisticated heads of department have got that message quite straight yet. They are still being used as a preparation for work rather than as diagnostic instruments to detect aptitudes.

"Sometimes the much more crude vocational tasters are in fact more truly diagnostic than the most sophisticated multi-skills workshops, because then it becomes very obvious if you're thrown straight into a catering situation, or a mechanical engineering workshop, whether you like it or you don't. I remember one college where the Lecturer II in the workshop once said, 'The first thing you say to any youngster who says 'I want to be motor mechanic' is 'Go and empty the sump of that car!'. He's either prepared to get himself black with grease, or else he says 'If that's it, it's not for me.' And that's a valuable piece of information to have."

iii. The Into Work Project

A feature of the programmes of a number of colleges over the last two to three years has been a series of short 12–13 week courses funded by what is now the TSD.

Introduction to Work courses are college-based and designed to meet the needs of young people with low levels of educational attainment who are uncertain of their career aims and have little self-confidence or motivation—the courses generally last up to 13 weeks although young people may stay longer if necessary and the bulk of time is taken up with skill-sampling in different occupational areas. Also included are life and social skills, careers guidance and remedial education as required. *Introduction to Work* courses are particularly appropriate for young people with little or no self-confidence, relatively poor motivation, little ability to communicate orally, and little informed understanding of employment prospects or direction.

While each college produces a version marked with its own stamp and redolent of its own flavour, the very concept of such a course strikes a new note in FE. A senior lecturer commented: "The interesting thing about the ITW is that it exemplifies a course which is of much shorter duration than the normal college calendar. . . . Your target population is to some extent a little more varied because you're talking about youngsters whose primary purpose has been the labour market and not a college".

One college has produced a very interesting version of this ITW course which runs continuously and students join it, stay for a period of usually about 10–13 weeks and leave it for some other destination, usually a job. This 'roll-on roll-off' pattern, as it is coming to be known in the jargon, is justified on two grounds. It enables:

"a. unemployed young people to enter a course as soon as a vacancy exists;

"b. courses to be kept full and young people joining a course late might have their motivation increased by seeing the way the course had helped those young people who had already spent some time on it."•

A number of colleges have followed suit and "roll-on roll-off" is becoming a feature of ITW courses. But perhaps the full importance of the existing ITW courses lies not in their current performance but in their function as signposts pointing down a new road. Perhaps what will prove in the long run the most important activity of ILEA's Curriculum Development Project is the so-called 'Holland pilot', or to give it its proper title, the "MSC/ILEA 'Into Work' Development Project", which is a pilot scheme financed jointly by the MSC and ILEA and currently running in three London colleges. The official description of the project describes it in these words: "The pilot project is an extension of the *Introduction to Work* course which has been running for some time within the Youth Opportunities Programme.

"The 'Into work Development Project' has similar objectives and aims to help a broadly similar group of young people—in particular those who are the long-term unemployed and unable to obtain work because of unrealistic aspirations, previous unsatisfactory short-term employment, communication or self-presentational problems, learning problems or poor motivation. Although structure and content differ in each college and the projects aim to be as flexible as possible, a common feature of each project is the utilisation of research currently being undertaken into generic and transferable skills. This is achieved by developing generic skill profiles for the types of jobs available locally and using this information to develop coherent and motivating learning exercises. Provision is made to identify students' strengths and weaknesses at an early stage and through the medium of these exercises it is aimed to build on strengths and make good deficiencies."

The most important part of this project for the long term lies in the attempt to utilise the results of research into the jobs actually available and the codification of the generic skills underlying the performance of those jobs. The content of courses will be derived, developed or modified in the light of the analysis provided by the research. The research should also provide eventually a model within which such a skills analysis becomes more generally available to allow other courses to be constructed and developed in this fashion.

The staff inspector concerned in an introduction to a paper describing a pilot investigation in the Wandsworth area made some pertinent comments on the results of the pilot:

"The following observations may be helpful—

1. As far as is known this kind of close enquiry has not previously been undertaken in this country. The investigating team found that neither employers, nor supervisors, nor job-holders necessarily had an overall and accurate perception of the skills required for competent performance of fairly simple operations.
2. For general curriculum purposes attention will need to be paid to those skills which recur in a number of seemingly unrelated occupations (ie generic or transferable skills).
3. Although the investigating team aimed at examining jobs into which 'less-able' (ie non-academic) young people might be expected to progress, it will be evident that some of the jobs surveyed required high levels of skill performance.
4. While FE establishments may be fairly familiar with the teaching of communication, numeracy and manipulative skills to non-academic young people, there are interesting curriculum implications (which have not yet been examined) in the areas of interpersonal and reasoning skills.

"The pilot investigation suggests that the sorts of data which can be obtained could have interesting and possibly important implications for FE curriculum. The employment pattern in Inner London is such that the research team will continue their enquiries by examining jobs which are common in the areas immediately surrounding certain colleges. The overall duration of the investigation is not likely to exceed two years."[10]

This brief account itself indicates the importance of this investigation and some of the issues it is likely to open up for discussion. TSA's original publication on the *'Grouping of skills'*[11] and subsequent work flowing from it, have aroused much interest but there are some fairly immediate points which teachers in the area of low-level courses will wish to investigate.

The skills analysis is basically identifying that which needs to be *taught*. The ILEA curriculum development project has been largely concerned with how students *learn*. One of the researchers writes in a description of the ideas behind the project "It is hoped, for example, that learning experiences will be designed which will allow students to explore a number of job 'families' and obtain skills in the process of exploration."[12] The design of those learning experiences for our constituency of students may prove more difficult in practice than would appear at first sight. The learning style favoured by our students is one that produces identifiable outcomes quickly. A skill needs to be specific and readily usable on a task seen to be important for the learner. What kind of learning strategy will permit the exploration of a family of skills and sustain interest and willingness to learn? It is no doubt possible to develop such a strategy; it may be that the theory and practice of the manipulative skills workshop at South Thames College may be a pointer to the way in which this may be developed. As yet it cannot be taken for granted that such a strategy will emerge automatically and the 'Holland pilot' must also be concerned with the development of such a strategy.

c. Strategies of Support—Personal Support

One of the features of the former local colleges for further education which illustrated the generosity of the authority and aroused some comment and often admiration from without were the systems of what in schools would be called pastoral care that had grown up in the colleges. Three colleges presented rather special developments in counselling services—the systems they had adopted were different but variations on a theme rather than completely disparate—but all the colleges had a time allowance for personal tutoring.

In 1973 an official working party of the authority visited all the 13 colleges for further education to look at existing arrangements for counselling and personal tutoring and produced a report that recognized that the 16–19 age group was one particularly likely to need counselling in personal, educational and vocational matters, and that "counselling was of importance to all students as a supportive, preventive service." The working party distinguished the following specialist counselling functions as likely to be necessary in an institution for further education:

"*i. PRACTICAL WELFARE:* The giving of practical advice and information on welfare matters

ii. PERSONAL COUNSELLING: Counselling in which the counsellor helps students increase their understanding of themselves so that they can realistically assess their potential and resolve any problems that occur during their time at college. The personal counsellor deals with conscious feelings of the students which may not previously have been voiced or fully recognised. To do this work effectively, consultancy facilities are necessary. One of the most important features of personal counselling is that it should be fully confidential.

iii. CAREERS TUTORING: Help with decisions over leaving college, over educational courses, and over basic career questions."[13]

They distinguished as important parts of the counselling service in further education:

"i Front-line figures—teacher-counsellors (ie personal tutors) responsible for initial contact with students and for diagnosis and referral of problems requiring specialist help.

ii. Specialist figures—people within the college fulfilling specialist counselling functions;
  a. The giving of practical advice and information on welfare matters;
  b. Personal non-directive counselling;
  c. Help with education and career choices."[14]

One principal writing about the system in his own college presented an apologia that would have been largely endorsed by the other two colleges with elaborated systems. He argued "that student services are ancillary to and supportive of the college's central teaching function. The college's responsibility is not to operate as a branch of the health service, the social services, or the careers service, but to ensure that students have the necessary information and understanding initially to choose courses appropriate for them and subsequently to overcome problems met with during their courses in order both to conclude them successfully and to prepare themselves for the next stage in their various careers. Put another way, the objectives are to reduce wastage, and increase effectiveness. While the latter is not readily susceptible to measurement, there is evidence from the General Education Department's full-time GCE courses of a reduction in wastage from 13% to 6½% following upon the introduction of a planned tutorial system".

Different colleges had different arrangements for the front-line figures, generally called tutors, though referred to in the report of the 1973 working party as teacher/counsellors. The working party team from its observations detected some confusion over their roles. In the words of the report:

"(They) may find themselves in confusing and sometimes conflicting roles. As the front-line, they are the people to whom student problems will first become apparent; it is the question of what they do about these problems which is crucial. In some colleges, uncertainty arises about whether, for example, students' absence, lateness and non-attendance, should be treated as symptoms of student difficulty to be discussed by teachers/counsellors or whether they are matters of discipline. It may be argued that such matters do, or may, need disciplinary action. The problem is that if it is the teacher-counsellor who is responsible for setting this in motion, his role as a befriending, personal counsellor may lack credibility and the counselling system may be seen as largely an instrument of control in a college. Colleges where this dilemma is appreciated most keenly seem to be those where counselling is well established and valued. It may be a sign of maturity in the college that it is aware of such hazards in a teacher/counsellor's role."[15]

The "specialist figures" also varied from college to college according to the arrangements made locally. All colleges had and still have a student services officer, whose role is well described by the principal quoted above:

"The unique function of Student Services Officers (formerly called Welfare Officers) is that they have freedom from teaching commitments and consequent ability to devote their time as circumstances require rather than attempting between teaching duties to meet students and their needs and especially to make contact on a student's behalf with the many agencies outside the college. Student problems concerned with finance, grants and immigration, liaison between students and the medical service when there is no doctor on site, assistance to students in search of accommodation, contact with the social services, and the like, would in most cases be better undertaken by the Student Services Officers, free as they are to develop knowledge of the services available, than by teachers. Inevitably, and appropriately, Student Services Officers in post will also form an important strand in the network of sympathetic listeners, and will often be able to help students in practical ways not necessarily open to teachers."

Some of the features noted by the 1973 working party are still present in the colleges. Others have disappeared or have been modified.

Most colleges have a doctor visiting on a regular basis or have arrangements to participate in a student health service. Some colleges have a college counsellor who is available to students and staff. The counsellors are available to students who wish to see them or are referred by their tutors and may spend half their time in such personal counselling. They need to maintain good contacts with outside agencies and internally act as consultants to the personal tutors. Some counsellors hold regular seminars or group meetings with the tutors.

Most colleges have career staff with, in some cases, a major remission of teaching duties. There is a wide range of possible duties and the function of such staff differs from college to college. Careers education—which is on the whole well done at Appendix II level—is, surprisingly, less well done at higher levels though there is a growing understanding of what might be provided. The ILEA careers inspectorate has a very clear idea of the perspective and the possibilities inherent in it. The difficulty has always been the translation of that view into reality at college level.

In one college which had an exceptional number of West Indian students the Community Relations Council jointly funded a Family Liaison Officer—a full-time social worker, to make contact with the families of West Indian students at the college and to offer any help which would be acceptable to the families in providing adequate support to first generation students in what is often an unfamiliar and threatening urban environment.

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need for support and consultancy. It said:

"The teacher/counsellor's role is a demanding one, not least because he needs to be aware of his limitations.

"This point was put strongly by the Welfare Officer at Southwark who felt there was a particular problem for the untrained in not recognizing presenting symptoms and not knowing when it was appropriate to refer. Teacher-counsellors may sometimes become over-involved with students and subsequent referral may be difficult. Also, the counselling role generates a considerable amount of anxiety and teacher/counsellors need to be able to voice this and receive support. For those reasons *the services of a consultant should be available for teacher-counsellors.* This consultant might be the specialised figure concerned with personal counselling within the college or a visiting specialist from outside with appropriate training.

"Frequent meetings of teacher-counsellors can themselves be supportive especially if a consultant is present. *It is important that time is available for teacher/counsellor meetings where general and specific problems can be discussed.*"[16]

At the time of the mergers in 1973–5, in each of the former colleges for further education there was to a greater or less extent a system embodying most of the features identified above.

The system was not without its critics and it was expensive in teacher time but there was some evidence from several colleges as to its value in sustaining students on the courses they had elected to enrol in and from which they might have dropped out without support.

Appendix II itself in describing the low-level work undertaken both with part-time craft students and the new type of general education courses dealt mainly in cognitive terms and had very little to say about the affective aspects of a student's development. It did seem to recognize that the counselling and personal tutoring that had been a feature of the colleges for further education should continue. For example, it mentioned "full-time courses of the kind described are likely to present special difficulties . . . personal tutoring may be desirable . . . colleges will need an appropriate staffing ratio taking into account the nature of the work they undertake in this field and providing where applicable for its needs in terms of curriculum development, personal tutoring, and academic administration."[17]

In the event, while the courses have not merely been safeguarded but expanded into an important sector of the work of the new colleges, the support services have been under pressure, if not outright attack. Principals and senior staff of the new colleges, frequently drawn from the old area colleges or from outside the authority, have not always accepted the premises upon which the support systems were established and in view of their consumption of staffing resources have sought to restrict them, or what amounts to the same thing, have expected them to undertake responsibility for a much wider spread of work.

It would appear that there has been a shift of view in the ILEA administration though no public announcements have been made. When a college of education, exploring the possibility of setting up an in-service course on counselling, wrote to the authority requesting a copy of the report of the "Working party on welfare and counselling facilities in colleges for FE" it was told no copies were available and in any case the report is no longer applicable. In purely formal terms this may be quite true. The colleges for further education have all disappeared, but the policy recommended in the report is still valid now if it were valid when it was published. It has not been officially rejected or repudiated after acceptance.

The consultancies mentioned in that document seem to be disappearing too, certainly in the form they took, and no doubt for good administrative reasons. The Family Liaison Officer mentioned earlier also seems to have disappeared. "She was able to visit homes where parents were unable or unwilling to make contact with the college. Unfortunately a new appointment does not see this as part of her role and members of staff living in the locality are now often spending their own time out of college on this liaison work."[18]

It is perfectly acceptable in a time of great financial stress, when the establishment of priorities becomes a matter of cosiderable importance, for one line of policy to be withdrawn—especially if it is too expensive—and to be replaced by another. But just as the underwriting of the Appendix II programme and the establishment of the curriculum development project were conscious and deliberate acts on the part of the authority, so also should be a major shift of emphasis such as might appear to be happening with the slow running-down of an established pattern of pastoral care. It is all the more essential since certain of the authority's members and officers valued the system sufficiently highly to ensure the establishment of a working party to see whether the best practice in the colleges could be extended over the whole group.

It may well be that the recommendations of the report were inadequate or do not fit the new situation of the late '70s and early '80s. But the problems that college counselling systems sought to deal with in the late '60s and early '70s have not gone and will not go away. They have probably intensified. Nor will approaches along a purely cognitive path looking only to the provision of courses supplying useful skills and information meet the case—not that anyone in the authority or the colleges would go so far as to suggest the situation was as simple as that.

It may be that the pattern of one-to-one tutoring/counselling sessions was as inadequate or unsuccessful as so many of the tutor group meetings are in which a teacher has to cast around for something to keep his group occupied with for half-an-hour. Both examples though they occur, probably frequently, are travesties of what was originally intended. Nevertheless alternatives must be sought. Small group tutorials are being experimented with in several colleges. In one college the head of department explained that the basic pastoral role lay with the course tutor; there was very little one-to-one counselling, but quite a lot of small group counselling and a weekly session with each group by people who were external to the teaching situation—the student services officer, a local vicar, and the head of department herself. "We found we had to put this in" said the head of department "to cope with their otherwise destructive criticism. As they begin to come to terms with their situation—we are the ones they get at!"

At another college, forms of group counselling were used to resolve tensions within the working group.

"They do that here", said the head of department, "with the "Job Ops" when there's been a flare-up. The course tutor deals with the individual at the time but he's brought back to the group, and they talk about it as a whole group."

Sessions at the Cockpit Theatre are used by other colleges. One college had struck a particular difficult group of young people attending a TSD 'Job opportunities course' with lost tempers and shows of agression:

"That's been a major problem with this group. There've been a lot of flare-ups in the workshop but we think these personal things are really as important as anything in the course. Lots of these students are terribly egocentric, very quick to flare up, can't work in groups.

"We go on Friday mornings to the Cockpit Theatre. There they go through a number of role conflict situations or act out personal problems. This is some of the work we think is very important. It takes those situations out of the college into neutral territory."

One of the colleges has called in the Grubb Institute to help with some of its work. It is ironic that the urgency of the situation on the one hand seems to be developing new and appropriate forms in some colleges, while in others complaints are heard about the new orthodoxy that discriminates against counselling. There would seem to be a fairly urgent need for the same concern to be displayed in making adequate provision for the affective side of the development of the "younger, less advanced, less advantaged" as the Curriculum Development Project has made for their cognitive development.

Implicit in much of the developed thinking of the Curriculum Development Project is the need for a counselling programme. The concepts of a "contract" between the student and the college, the idea that a student should not stay at college indefinitely but leave at the most propitious moment, the giving of reassurance that FE opportunities are not "now or never" on a full-time basis but there are opportunities for recurrent education, all require someone to present the possiblities to a student, to help him work through his anxieties and to come to terms with his situation so that he can make a decision.

Where the project talks about 'counselling" it almost always means "careers counselling" but as the workers in the field know this is only one strand in the network and though important by itself it is not sufficient. The logic of the Project's own concept of building confidence and becoming responsible for one's own learning, calls for real counselling, not the misguided forms of tutorial activity that tend to increase dependency on the teacher and are not, in any case, what the authors of the working party report were advocating.

In one college a system of review by tutors of all new students' progress on a given day six weeks into the first term of their course was recently instituted. There was at first some reaction from some tutors as they believed—quite correctly—that pressure was being put on students to comply with "the contract" they implicitly entered into when enrolling in the college and this conflicted with the image the tutors had of themselves. The possible role conflict which was mentioned in the working party report on welfare and counselling is being exaggerated in this instance. To be part of the formal machinery for identifying and punishing misdemeanours, with absence or lateness being identified as a misdemeanor, is one thing. To be supportive to a student by checking whether he is doing his work, whether he can meet his commitments, arrive on time, sustain attendance, is something else and *is expected by the student and recognised as supportive.*

One of the fallacies that has crept into the thinking of many teachers in their tutor role is that of making allowances beyond the limits set by the circumstances of the case. They recognize quite correctly the relation between poverty, disturbed home background, disrupted schooling, and the plight of many under-achieving students. Incorrectly, they sentimentally connive with young persons in making these situations excuses for not meeting the commitments the students have entered upon. Such attitudes are of no help to students and quite unsupportive and also bring the proper tutoring and support role into contempt.

The growing pressures upon this constituency of students are so great that it is no moment for anyone to cling to shibboleths or to ignore what may be reasonably done to support—but not to disarm and to render dependent—those who face such difficult situations.

CHAPTER 7

The Nature of the Provision—Courses

Section 1—Learning to Learn—A Pattern of Courses

Since 1974 there has been a marked growth in the numbers of students and in the range of courses, and variety of activities provided for "the younger, less advanced" category of students and in the numbers of people enrolled therein. For example, it was estimated in 1973 in Appendix II itself that the total number of students enrolled in full-time courses of "general education" was about 300 in the whole authority. By 1978 that number had grown to about 900 but most of those were enrolled on courses of a distinctively new pattern. The older forms of general education too had evolved.

Some idea of the full extent of low-level activity courses by the ILEA's definition of Appendix II may be obtained from a document first published in 1977 and revised and reissued in 1979, a "Register of less-advanced courses mainly for school-leavers at Further and Higher Education Colleges". Compiled by the staff inspector responsible, it can in no way be regarded as definitive as it relied on each college's interpretation of what it was appropriate to include. Thus while some part-time courses are included, the great majority of part-time low-level craft courses are excluded, and yet it was with the curricular problems of students on such courses that the ILEA Project began.

In the absence of any fuller record, these two publications, the 1977–78 Register and the 1979–80 Register give the most comprehensive picture available. Tables I–IV give an analysis of the courses included in the Register with several indications of the growth over the last two years. But unusual growth, though impressive, gives a somewhat doubtful view of what is actually happening. In addition to the replication of courses and the addition of new courses and new types of courses, the nature of many of the courses is itself changing. Even when it is possible for the formal description of, for example, a general education course to remain unchanged the actual experiences of a student on a course today might be substantially different from what they would have been two years ago.

"Learning to Earn" is a leaflet first published in Spring 1979 by the ILEA. A boy or girl about to leave school, worried about the future, uncertain whether to stay in education, not over-enthusiastic about the prospect of a sixth form, or not clear what type of job to look for, might find it useful. So might a young person who had already left school and tested the waters of employment but found them too chill—who had found no job, or only one that gave no satisfaction. Or a young person who had been in work and had left or been made redundant might find some encouragement in it.

The leaflet, attractively produced in the form of a folder with eight panels, describes very briefly in direct and simple language "full-time courses at Inner London's FE Colleges for school leavers and other young adults, who want to continue their general education while deciding what to do next—and want to learn more about work and jobs".

Three kinds of courses are presented in this leaflet under the headings—*General Education, Deciding on a Job,* and *Learning about a Job*—and these three headings do provide a useful frame into which most of the full-time Appendix II courses for the younger age group can be placed.

Grouping the current provision in this way reveals that while there are elements common to almost all the courses the three categories correspond closely to the particular needs of the stage that the young person has reached. *General education* courses are presented as appropriate for those who so far have made no definite decisions or given any commitment either to a further course of study or an area of employment.

Such young people may still be finding out about what is available—and about themselves. They may also be conscious of deficiencies of basic skills, be unsure of themselves, be unable to cope with the authority of others and hold their own discussions. A good general education course should go some way to remedy such deficiencies as well as helping the student to come to a decision about his immediate future—continued education or a job.

Most of the courses in the second category *Deciding on a Job,* are short full-time courses and the standard pattern is to offer the possibilities of sampling several kinds of employment and associating these sessions with reinforcement of basic skills in language and number and to devote some time to the development of personal and social skills.

Learning about a Job covers a group of courses which are much more specific to an area of development and range from fairly traditional courses for RSA or CGLI qualifications to the short courses sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission.

The "Register of Less-Advanced Courses" for 1977–8 which by the very nature of its mode of compilation cannot be regarded as completely accurate nevertheless does give a fairly reliable picture of the broad spread of courses. It is not always easy to fit the courses as described in the register exactly into the categories of the leaflet. Most of the full-time courses listed would probably fall into the third category but *General Education* can claim about a fifth of the total and these refer very closely to that section of the 16–19 age group with lowest achievement. Some of these courses have clearly developed out of the standard type of full-time low-level course offered in several of the colleges for further education in the late '60s before the mergers. Thus a number still seem to be largely directed towards preparing students for a further course that may gain them a GCE qualification but most of these courses are undergoing some kind of major transformation. To various degrees they are moving towards acceptance of the reality that most of the students who embark on them will not achieve even minimal success in GCE and a large number will have left the college or at least dropped out of a large section of their programme arranged for them before the end of the year. Thus it is not uncommon to find that the courses identified as "CSE" or "pre-O level" or as "diagnostic general education" or as "pre-vocational" all begin to show certain common features.

The wide spectrum of courses represented by the open fan is gradually closing upon the norm—which is perhaps represented by the so-called 'one-year pre-employment courses' that have received a preliminary but reasonably detailed mapping by a team from Garnett College who have surveyed the national field.[1] That descriptive account was a major contribution to the FEU's study group which produced the report "A Basis for Choice". It is noteworthy that London's experience makes an important contribution both in the descriptive work and in the thinking of the FEU, "Mansell", report.[2]

The Appendix II proposals have provided an extremely useful frame that is allowing a continous process of re-thinking and reformulation and clarification. It is possible to document by example the movement identified by the Garnett report: "Our general impression . . . was that not many 'purely' general education courses are now offered for the groups below 'O' level. Many of these courses have moved towards the vocational end of the continuum by including work experience or work sampling . . ."[3]

There is now a widespread belief in the London colleges that in order to attract and hold students courses must appear to have a clear and convincing link with employment. General education must be seen as leading to further progressive courses or directly to an area of employment with enhanced qualification. Thus the frame of the leaflet may represent more accurately the general direction of the movement than a precise statement of what each course offers. There is still the danger that the "vocational" garb may only be worn for presentational purposes. Not every teacher on general education courses has accepted this new orientation, and though the best courses will have incorporated much of the thinking and practice of the Curriculum Development Project, on other courses much of the "vocational" and "pre-vocational" activity may on closer examination turn out to be as formal and as sterile as any "academic" set of activities with which they might be contrasted.

The general orientation of the leaflet is quite clear. It looks towards work as the goal of educational activity and its panels represent stages on the path towards a vocational commitment. Until the leaflet was published, few of the colleges thought quite so precisely about the overall pattern of their low-level provision. Once the frame has been presented it is found to be a useful tool. Thus while offering a simple and straightforward description of what colleges have in general to offer, it is also a signpost for the future.

Tables 1–5 which follow summarize the quantity and range of provision over the two years 1977–8 and 1979–80.

TABLE 1 ALL 16–19/APPENDIX II COURSES/CLASSES

Subject area	No of available courses 1977/78	1979/80	increase	increase %	No of teaching groups/classes 1977/78	1979/80	increase	increase %
Business/clerical	33	47	14	42·42	40	57	17	42·50
Caring professions	6	8	2	33·33	7	10	3	42·86
Catering	4	5	1	25·00	4	10	6	150·00
Construction	18	26	8	44·44	21	32	11	52·38
Engineering	14	16	2	14·29	14	18	4	28·57
General Education	24	30	6	25·00	33	44	11	33·33
Leather trades	2	3	1	50·00	2	4	2	100·00
Photography & Arts	1	3	2	200·00	1	3	2	200·00
Preparatory (Mature)	11	19	8	72·73	17	23	6	35·29
Printing		1	1			1	1	
Retail	2	3	1	50·00	2	3	1	50·00
Special Education	3	6	3	100·00	4	7	3	75·00
Vocational Preparation	5	21	16	320·00	9	26	17	188·89
	123	188	65	52·85	154	238	84	54·55

TABLE II TSD FUNDED COURSES—YOP AND PREPARATORY (INCLUDED IN TABLE 1)

Subject area	No of available courses 1977/78	1979/80	increase	increase %	No of teaching groups/classes 1977/78	1979/80	increase	increase %
Business/clerical	2	5	3	150·00	2	5	3	150·00
Construction	1	1	0	0·00	3	2	–1	–33·33
Engineering	3	4	1	33·33	3	4	1	33·33
Photography	1	1			1	1		
Preparatory (Mature)	11	14	3	27·27	16	19	3	18·75
Retail	2	3	1	50·00	2	3	1	50·00
Vocational Preparation	1	9	8	800·00	1	9	8	800·00
	20	37	17	85·00	27	43	16	59·26

TABLE III ITB SPONSORED COURSES (INCLUDED IN TABLE I)

Engineering	3 16	0 24	–3 8	–100·00 50·00	3 17	0 29	–3 12	–100·00 70·59
Construction	19	24	5	26·32	20	29	9	45·00

TABLE IV TSD AND ITB COURSES/CLASSES: PERCENTAGE OF ALL 16–19/APPENDIX II COURSES/CLASSES

	% of all available courses		% of total	% of all teaching groups/classes		% of total
1977/78	1979/80	increase	1977/78	1979/80	increase	
TSD courses only	16·26	19·68	26·15	17·53	18·07	19·05
ITB courses only	15·45	12·77	7·69	12·99	12·18	10·71
TSD & ITB courses	31·71	32·45	33·85	30·52	30·25	29·76

TABLE V

Percentage Distribution of Courses by the Categories of the leaflet "Learning to Earn"

	Full-Time	Short Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
General Education	25·1	5·1	7·5	37·7
(General Education)				(14·5)
(Vocational Preparation)				(23·2)
Deciding on a Job	4·8	3·8	0·6	9·2
Learning About Jobs	36·4	9·9	2·5	48·8
Other Courses	3·3	1·0	—	4·3
Totals	69·6%	19·8%	10·6%	100%

(Based on the Register of Less-Advanced Courses in ILEA Further and Higher Colleges in 1979–80)

Section 2—The "Hybrid" Course

While the work orientation of less-advanced courses in ILEA may be exemplified by the inclusion on the more traditional academic courses of careers education, which might even include some work experience, in general a much clearer distinction is being made between such courses and the newer vocational preparation courses. Selection for each type of course is becoming more discriminating.

The courses go by various names in the colleges—"Foundation", "Gateway", "Which Job?", "What Next?", —but they are all general education courses, diagnostic in purpose and looking, in the main, towards employment as the outcome of the course. In origin a number of them were "hybrids" and sought to help students keep their options open and move either into GCE courses, vocational courses or work. One course that eight years ago began with the pattern:

1. "General education (2 days). May include GCE 'O' level, special help with basic communication skills, literacy and numeracy as required. Includes also wide range of elective skills.
2. Vocational studies (2 days). Chosen from a range of options.
3. Counselling and careers education (1 day)."

has now eliminated all reference to 'O' level and stresses the diagnostic element:

"On that one we take students who don't have much idea of where they want to go. We deliberately choose the people who have no idea and direct people who have some idea to another appropriate course. The core subjects in the course now are Communication, Careers Advice and Vocational Options."

A department in one college has persisted with the full hybrid pattern in the face of criticism from within the college itself and from without. It is expensive in staff time, it faces problems of non-attendance and, in spite of the 'O' level options, few stay on to take the examination.

The staff inspector made a general comment about courses of this kind:

"There is an inherent difficulty in this type of course; firstly, because there is a risk of confusion in the minds of the students between the acquisition of a skill which can be convertible for many vocational purposes, and the training which they may think they are receiving for a specific job. The lecturers take pains to ensure that the students do not assume that they are being given job training, but very careful and sensitive careers education is needed if there are not to be disappointments at the end of the day when students may feel that they have had preparation for non-existent specific jobs.

"The other problem with a course of this kind is a philosophical one. Old ideas about the work ethic have modified by recent experience, particularly by the recognition that many young people and adults are unable to obtain work through no fault of their own. Psychologically it is damaging for them to feel guilty because they are unable to contribute to the economy, in ways which previous generations took for granted. To some teachers, therefore, the deliberate preparation of students for work, which they may consider unrewarding or even derogatory, is an untenable educational activity. Others consider that students are entitled to expect a college of further education to prepare them simply, effectively but realistically for future occupations or for entry to further training or relevant vocational studies. These conflicts of thought are clearly represented among the teachers involved in this course and cannot easily be resolved."[4]

The presence of the pre 'O' level options which only some students take is perhaps one of the aspects that flaws the model. Their inclusion has been made with the best and most liberal of intentions—to ensure, even for these most disadvantaged young people, the keeping open of the academic route. But as the tutor herself says, it is an inappropriate route. It is certainly premature.

The experience of the first college quoted led it to narrow the objective of its courses, make them more precise but at the same time more readily achievable by the students. It thus ensures that succession to a second course is preceded by an experience of success at the earlier stage, although not in the sense of climbing over an examination hurdle. The broader, more liberal frame, even though it includes academic options as well as vocational ones, even though it has both work experience as well as artistic and creative options, remains ambiguous in the messages it is sending to the young people who choose it.

The teaching of study skills on such a course is one thing; but the insertion of an academic option for a minority is already beginning to function like streaming within a school. Students such as these with the experiences they have previously undergone can read, very readily, the signals embodied in organisational patterns of this kind. Perhaps the concluding paragraph of Nell Keddie's essay on 'Classroom Knowledge' may have some relevance in this context:

"... Two panaceas currently put forward to reform the educational system are unstreaming and an undifferentiated curriculum. It seems likely that these prescriptions overlook the fact that streaming is itself a response to an organising notion of differential ability. It seems likely that the hierarchical categories of ability and knowledge may well persist in unstreamed classrooms and lead to the differentiation of undifferentiated curricula, because teachers differentiate in selection of content and in pedagogy between pupils perceived as of high and of low ability. The origins of these categories are likely to lie outside the school and within the structure of the society itself in its wider distribution of power. It seems likely, therefore, that innovation in schools will not be of a very radical kind unless the categories teachers use to organise what they know about pupils and to determine what counts as knowledge undergo a fundamental change."[5]

Section 3—New Wine in Old Bottles

Two closely parallel courses which run in a number of London colleges have both been developed by the Royal Society of Arts—the RSA *Vocational Preparation (Clerical)* course and the RSA course in *Basic Clerical Procedures*. Both courses are relatively new. The *Basic Clerical Procedures* certificate has been available for some time. The *Vocational Preparation* certificate became nationally available in 1979 after a 3-year pilot in the ILEA. There is superficially much common ground shared by the two programmes though the target groups who might in practice be identical are defined rather differently. *Basic Clerical Procedures* states: "No formal entry requirements are required but candidates (who will probably have followed CSE courses and be at least 16 years old) must satisfy the educational establishment of their ability to profit from, and successfully complete, all areas of study of the course. Students selected for this course must be defined as having a specific interest in obtaining employment in clerical situations and capable of obtaining this ambition by the end of the course".[6]

Vocational Preparation states: "The course is intended for students interested in occupations involving the performance of clerical skills, such as those indicated in the section on employment opportunities for successful candidates. These occupations will probably satisfy some or all of the following conditions:

Be indoors
Be with people
Be with paper
Be with simple machines
Include order and neatness
Involve methodical and possible repetitive work
Be within a fairly small unit.

Some students may develop a capacity for more demanding study or employment. All students therefore should be encouraged to make realistic assessments of their immediate and subsequent employment potential to enable them to consider the appropriate opportunities for further studies and/or training."[7]

Course aims for *Basic Clerical Procedures* are stated quite succinctly in two sentences.

"1. To develop an understanding of the purpose of commerce and industry in relation to its place in society.
2. To provide basic skills in and knowledge of clerical procedures leading to the RSA certificate and to further study and/or employment in an office."[8]

Vocational Preparation on the other hand has eight sections under the headings Communication, Operative and Manipulative Skills, and five under the headings Careers Education (including work experience) and Personal Development. It is interesting to note that the *Basic Clerical Procedures* course includes mention of the certificate as part of the definition of aims, whereas the aims of the *Vocational Preparation* course concentrate on performance.

Basic Clerical Procedures was developed by the RSA as the result of an approach from the MSC for an appropriate qualifying certificate for entry into clerical jobs at operative level. The *Vocational Preparation* Certificate was the outcome of the first attempt by the ILEA's Curriculum Development Project Group to design a complete course for students within the Appendix II category.

The Garnett report comments "In spite of the differences between the *Basic Clerical Procedures* course and the shorter *Vocational Preparation* course there have been suggestions that the two schemes should be merged. The possibility is at present under discussion."[9]

The experience of these courses is most instructive and sheds light on some underlying attitudes among teachers that could have a fundamental effect on the shaping of developments in the whole area of vocational preparation and low level general education. The differences in attitudes emerged quite sharply at a short residential course held by the ILEA business studies inspectorate in the summer of 1979 and attended by representatives from schools and colleges. The aim of the course was to explore the possibility of developing link courses in clerical studies between colleges and schools, much on the pattern of the so-called bridging course discussed later.

Teachers in schools tended to prefer the *Basic Clerical Procedures* pattern. The idea of a school course leading directly into a job and the pupil leaving as soon as he had got a job was strange to them and to a few it was offensive. Faced with two alternative patterns of course the reaction of most of the teachers from the schools on this course was either to reject the *Vocational Preparation* model or to find an appropriate niche in the hierarchical structure of courses. Some college business studies departments responsible for this course had the same perception. They already had some low-level clerical courses. They did not see this course (or the *Basic Clerical Procedures*) as alternatives but tried to arrange a pecking order of courses and to define the entry requirements to each course so finely that it was simply a matter of identifying the level of the student, labelling him and slotting him in. Such an attitude is the ultimate expression of the negative forms of streaming and labelling, of the subject-dominated teacher-dependent concept of schooling and the exact opposite of the thinking of the ILEA Curriculum Development Project teams who designed the *Vocational Preparation* course.

In some colleges the *Vocational Preparation* course was placed in the general studies department, in some colleges in the business studies department and in a third group of colleges in a combined general and business studies department. The nature of the course and the way it was conducted did vary to some extent according to where it was placed, but in view of an advisory teacher working to the business studies inspectorate this had less to do with where it was placed than to the age, attitude and previous experience of the head of department and the business studies teachers. Where the mergers had brought about the dominance of representatives from an older, well-established department, with old-fashioned traditions, the *vocational preparation* course was sharply differentiated from the other courses in the department including *Basic Clerical Procedures*. Where there was a younger head of department recently appointed with staff rather less set in their ways, a different, more integrated view obtained and not only was the course continuing to develop but it was influencing the thinking of people running the other courses in the department. Her comments on the two courses were illuminating:

"The *Basic Clerical Procedures* and the *Vocational Preparation* course—I think they've got a difference in philosophy because they've been devised by two different sets of people—but when you see them in practice and when you monitor them, when you see the ones that are running well in practice then they're very much alike indeed and you can't distinguish between them at all.

"The good courses, whatever name they go by, are alike, in that they have integration of the work across the subject areas, they have work experience built into the course, they have a good course tutor who understands how to use the clerical medium to educate in the fullest sense but keeps an eye on the fact that you are trying to get the kid into a job at the end. This is where the difference tends to come; in philosophical debate the general education teacher tends to stress more than is necessary the life skills aspect, while the business studies teacher tends to stress far more than is necessary, the job-getting, the vocational skill. To achieve either aim, you have to aim for both. There's no way you can achieve either aim without achieving the other half. My own opinion is that the two courses should be merged by the RSA."

I have dealt with these two courses and their inter-relationship in some detail as the example contains embryonically most of the crucial questions raised by the need to extend the area of work for the younger, less-advanced and less-advantaged. The form of the course is different from that to which the teachers are accustomed. Although there will be of necessity a large input, (about 50%) of what is familiarly called "general education", its form will be different from that on standard courses and it will be integrated with the vocational elements or, at least, there will be a wide margin of interweave. This interweaving entails close cooperation between specialist and general studies teachers and the approaches of both will need to be modified in the direction of experiential forms of learning. If assignment, project-type activity is employed students will learn from situations rather than from being told; the teacher's role will be less expository before the event and more explanatory or reflexive after the event. In the phraseology adopted by Barnes and Shemilt the teacher engages in less and less of a transmission type of activity and performs more of an integrated role.[10]

Not many teachers are fully equipped to tackle such programmes immediately and even if they are they may be hesitant unless they can be assured of the approval of their colleagues and the support of authority figures in the college and the local educational hierarchy.

The London experience demonstrates that it is not an impossible task, but it also shows how relatively slow is the rate of real progress. There is a converging movement in the case of the courses we have just discussed and there has been a little movement in the area of craft courses. But if the full range of pre-vocational work foreseen in the FEU's "A Basis of Choice" is to develop, if the UVP scheme is to grow and embody the curriculum thinking of the FEU's "Experience, Reflection, Learning",[11] if the double-exit general education courses—into work, into more education—are to function efficiently and in the best interests of the student, then the difficulties identified have to be resolved. The creation of numerous courses and their association into a hierarchic structure and a super selection of students has to be resisted. Fewer broader levels need to be established, each allowing room for the student to grow and develop at his own pace. The conflicting attitudes arising from divergent ages and experiences have to be reconciled. Teachers need to be won to new forms of organising learning experiences, helped over what are the initially terrifying anxieties about controlling the process. And all this has to be done not just in the field of business studies but eventually across the whole wide spectrum of vocational choice. Seen in this context the RSA *Vocational Preparation* Certificate and the courses leading to it and its relation to the *Basic Clerical Procedures* Certificate and the ramifications of their impact in the London colleges and schools have lessons for us all.

Section 4—Link Courses and the Bridging Course

In the wake of the Newsom Report several colleges in London established link courses with schools. In the early '60s these were of several kinds. Some were general education courses in which on the day the young people came to college they were engaged in a programme of social education, exploration of the community and the development of communication skills—especially those of reading and writing. Other courses provided a 'vocational' or 'pre-vocational' day. For example some pupils from 5th forms on a 'Retail Option' would attend one day a week at certain colleges to do the CGLI *Junior Retail Distribution* Certificate course. Courses of this kind could be faulted because the CGLI Certificate had been designed originally on the assumption that the student was spending the other four days in practical work in the designated vocational field. The fact that there were such courses which could be so used points to faults in the course design and shows how 'academic' they were in essence, and how little they relied upon actual experience of the job.

To meet this gap the CGLI Foundation range of courses has been designed to cover some 16 vocational areas, and to supply the missing element. Work experience is optional on most of the models but is an essential part of community care.[12]

As the older type of link course with schools has died away newer types have grown up. A common form of link is the supplementing of school 6th form programmes by offering a subject or subjects which the school cannot offer. Such courses in subjects from the pure sciences as well as the social sciences have been successfully established and proved helpful to the schools, especially in supplementing their 'A' level programmes. The old forms of vocational link have been replaced in some cases by the CGLI Foundation courses mentioned above, shared between school and college, and where the college can bring a technical or commercial expertise that is lacking in the school. The latest form of link course is the so-called 'bridging course'.

The bridging course emanated from an ILEA inspectorate working party set up to look at 'Improved Cooperative Educational Provision by Schools and Colleges for Low-Achieving 15–19 year olds'.[12] In the '50s and early 60s when the schools were faced with the 'problem' of what to do with the increasing number of young people staying on voluntarily to 16 and sometimes to 17, one answer seemed to lie in the provision of a number of vocational options—engineering studies, business studies, retail studies, and home economics. The raising of the school leaving age, the coming of CSE, and pressures from outside the school and from within the school to provide 'real education', ie the teaching of 'subjects' led to the modification and in some cases the disappearance of these vocational options. The problems remained of providing an adequate curriculum for this group of young people, many of whom though 'low achievers' were far from devoid of potential. As further education in its low-level courses was picking up many of these young people after they had left school, and in many cases succeeding to help them gain qualifications that had eluded them at school and which enabled them to get and hold jobs, this working party sought to make available to schools the fruits of further education's experience.

The first form in which the bridging proposals were conceived involved a first year (15–16) spent in school and a second year (16–17) spent in an FE college.

The essential thinking of the proposals derived from the concept of a young person's transition from school and its child-centred environment to eventual employment in a production-orientated adult world. It would also represent, in line with much of the Curriculum Development Project's thinking, a move from dependence towards eventual autonomy.

The first year of the programme would be a school-based 5th-form link course including a substantial element of work at college, with emphasis on vocational preparation and on exploring the range and type of work offered at colleges. At the same time, studies in language and number and in other subjects would be continued in schools.

At the end of the year the pupil would proceed to the second year of the bridging course, or opt for a full-time course in further education or in the 6th form, or leave for employment.

The second year would be a full-time vocational orientation course at college, requiring the student to pursue studies in one or other of a number of vocational fields. Language and number work would be increasingly related to the demands of vocational studies and of work situations. The student, helped by careers counselling could decide on his ultimate employment and any further education or training that might be appropriate.

The inspectors supported their proposals in these terms:

"We believe that this bridging programme will best serve the needs of our main target group—those who are uncertain and who may have many personal difficulties and frustrations. The early stages of the bridging programme may well need to be devoted to gaining the confidence of these young people and to transforming a reluctance to learn into willingness to entertain and achieve success. As a vehicle for this transition, we see a strong vocational emphasis pitched in the second year of the bridging programme at levels appropriate either to immediate employment at operative-equivalent level or, for the higher achiever, to a progression to studies at craft-equivalent standard.

"We believe that there are distinct advantages to be gained by introducing the pupils we have in mind, during their fifth year at secondary school, to the particular qualities and concerns which characterise FHE colleges. Attitudes and relationships within FHE are largely conditioned by the fact that the student is preparing himself for work, or is already in employment. Experience in most colleges suggests that even the younger and more boisterous student generally adapts responsibly to this situation. We therefore think that it will be useful for young people emerging from secondary education to be exposed to this environment and to encounter teachers whose experience in industry or commerce they can recognize and appreciate. We further believe that their attitude to studies within the school will benefit as a consequence. Despite this it might be that, at certain levels and in certain areas, a vocational element could appropriately be provided within the school; but for generally, and in order to achieve the breadth of coverage that is required, there may well be sound practical reasons why this provision should be met by colleges."[13]

For a long time there has been in the minds of some head teachers an endemic fear that further education may rob them of their 6th form pupils. More recently there has been a growing preoccupation with falling rolls, sinking numbers in 6th forms, and the problems of adequately covering the existing 'A' level programme. It was therefore surprising, if not a little naive, of the inspectorate to put forward as their main proposal in such blunt terms a pattern of bridge that had the 5th year in school and the 6th year in a college. It is not surprising that the proposal in its original form was not adopted.

The inspectors had made an additional proposal for a school-based programme which was in essence a one-year link course with some time spent at a college for those who are at the end of their school course and as yet unclear about their vocational future Though some of the pupils might subsequently move into a full-time further education course, there was no planned progression or second college-based year in this pattern. Thus it was not a "bridge" in the sense of the first proposal.[14]

It was this latter pattern, or a modification of it, that was finally accepted by the schools and it got off to a slow and rather shaky start, the progress of the activity being aided and monitored by one of the advisory teachers from the Curriculum Development Project. Ten schools and five colleges are taking part and the scheme is monitored also as part of an EEC project of comparative education with two other projects in different parts of Britain.

Those who have only read the inspectors' original proposals and not followed the subsequent negotiations—including some principals—have acquired a misconceived view of the relatively limited beginnings of the course. The full "bridging" concept is largely emergent rather than achieved. Even some participants on the FE side have not fully understood the present scheme.

A senior lecturer responsible for this course in a college, complained forcibly:

"My main criticism is that it's not a bridge at all. The kids don't come on to college for their second year and I don't know why—every time I ask a question about this at bridge meetings nobody chooses to answer. It does not operate as it was intended because we don't get proper communications established with the school. This is really it. There was overlapping of some items of the curriculum last year. This year some of what had been agreed was omitted. There have been constant battles about money."

On closer investigation, it seemed that there was a misunderstanding about the nature of the bridging course itself—my informant clearly expected Mark 1 of the proposals to be in operation and did not appreciate that what was operating was Mark 2. Again, her second-line criticism of lack of communication seemed to be justified but it really applied more to the local situation in the particular consortium in which she was working rather than to the general scheme.

Although the whole bridging project did progress very slowly, it was a genuine progress. It represents an interesting example of the way in which new curriculum thinking can be disseminated but it is also a comment on the initial slowness of growth in the acceptance of new thinking.

The mode of operation of the advisory teacher responsible for this course in the Project is interesting. It marks a contrast to the way in which in its early days the Project attracted some criticism because of its somewhat brash approach in the matter of establishing a model 'General Studies and Communications' module for the TEC submissions from ILEA colleges.

"Yes, progress is slow," said the advisory teacher "but then we've had to work it out. It's been a genuine grassroots development. The Blue Book" (ie the inspectorate report) "only gave the barest guidelines and we didn't regard them in any other way. Nothing definite was laid down, either about curriculum or the way to organise." There were problems of organisation and administration. Schools worked to a divisional office, FE works direct to County Hall. A problem arises when two schools in different divisions are linked to the same college. "We had to find ways of resolving these difficulties. We had to establish effective contact, not just between the institutions but between the teachers engaged in the work."

In the first stage of the bridging project in each consortium, colleges and schools had worked out between them a programme and a division of responsibility for carrying it out according to certain very broad guidelines. Representatives from schools and colleges met regularly to hear reports on progress from the consortia. After the first year certain common problems were identified—including that of a model curriculum— and subcommittees were established to work out possible solutions for presentation to the full group of representatives from participating schools and colleges some time before the end of the 3-year pilot run.

This mode of working gave schools and colleges a relatively free hand at the beginning but by the autumn of 1979 the Curriculum Overview Group was beginning to formulate some coherent and practical proposals for an ultimate curriculum that derived not only from general considerations about the situation and needs of the young person in transition from school to adult status, but also from the practical experiences of schools and colleges participating in the scheme so far.

A 2-tier system of management in one of the consortia produced a model in which top management was able to show interest and put the stamp of approval on the scheme without being worried by or interfering with the close day-to-day operation of the scheme. A senior committee, meeting once or twice a year and consisting of the principal, the heads of participating schools, and the course tutors, made up the top layer; while a working committee meeting several times a term of teachers from each institution working directly on the project guaranteed the close cooperation needed to ensure all the parts of the scheme were equally effective.

The possibility of CGLI assessment of the whole scheme has been advanced—students already work for the Certificate No 772 in *Communication Skills* while there is also the probability of a package CSE with four Mode 3 subjects. Two of the consortia are conducting an experiment with profiling and record keeping.

The precise form of cooperation between the two types of institutions varies between the different consortia. Students spend at least one day in the FE college but in some cases there is a more even division of time betweeen the institutions. In some cases teaching staff move from their base to the other building. In at least one of the consortia a second year has emerged, again with the time divided equally between school and college.

A full assessment of this project is to be made at the end of the third pilot year in 1980. It would seem to be an important development, not only in its own right but as one possible first stage of an alternative route to continuing education.

Section 5—Special Access

The other end of that route is exemplified by the growing number of special access courses being established in collaboration with Higher Education institutions to allow those who might at one stage have fallen into the category of 'younger, less-advanced, less-advantaged' entry into higher education without on the one hand having to leap all the normal range of academic hurdles and on the other without diluting the content of what is taught in the university or polytechnic, undermining the rigour with which it expects its studies to be conducted, and generally lowering the standard of its work. The courses so far established have been carefully observed, the subsequent progress of the students from them has been carefully monitored, and so far the necessary conditions for considering these courses successful seem to have been met.

The first course was established on the initiative of a polytechnic in 1975. The head of department described the origins of this course in these terms:

"The first one started in response to a request from the polytechnic, who said they were interviewing people for their Diploma in Social Work course and they felt that the West Indian people who were coming through were capable of doing the course but didn't have the traditional academic qualifications. They contacted the college and a group of people got together to talk about what could be done about that situation. Out of that grew the Diploma of Social Work Foundation Course.

"That was followed by a request couched in exactly the same terms for some sort of course for the BEd and that one started this year. The first group of students from the Diploma in Social Work Foundation have qualified and I believe they're all employed now."

The course was conceived as an integral whole—a three-year course, containing a foundation year spent in the further education college with automatic entry on to the two-year Diploma in Social Work at the Polytechnic. The idea of the foundation year was not to enable students to meet the regular formal entry requirements but to prepare them directly to benefit from the professional course itself. The well-established foundation year for the BEd follows the same pattern.

The interim report on the foundation year of the first course explains its rationale.

"Historically there have been few people selected for enrolment to the Diploma of Social Work course who have particular knowledge of and interest in West Indian communities and perhaps Asian communities in Britain. This pattern of selection can be seen at other educational institutions offering professional training. Consequently, there are few such students receiving professional social work training at a time in which this profession is developing to meet growing needs of modern society.

"It is difficult for them to gain admission to the course because the selection procedure requires a high degree of verbal and written skills, these abilities being needed both for professional social work and for the demands of the course. Customarily these skills have not been stressed or developed in the cultures or life styles of some ethnic groups. Problems regarding basic formal education as well as cultural differences have tended to eliminate them as applicants for training, although many posess the necessary motivation and degree of intelligence."[15]

What marks this particular special access scheme has been its concentration upon a single ethnic group. The arguments for establishing special access can be applied to all sectors of the Appendix II population. In this particular case, there were good reasons for confining it in the first place to one particular ethnic group. The report says "A conscious decision was made in the first year of the pilot course to concentrate on one particular ethnic group, ie West Indian, in that a homogeneous group was considered vital to the learning environment and that it would enable the language-communications needs of the students to be met more efficiently. West Indians were selected because they formed the largest minority ethnic group in London."[16]

While the needs of ethnic minorities are present in the minds of those developing access courses elsewhere, the courses have a broader role to play than helping the needs of a single ethnic minority.

Much of the thinking that went into the design of the curriculum derived directly from work that had been done at lower levels with Appendix II courses and in particular "the workshop strategy".

The University Access course presents other problems. "And that's a different situation altogether", said the head of department "because the need is not for a vocational area. It's not such a clearcut need. The request again came from the university to ILEA . . . There isn't a specific course we're aiming for, it's just they'll go on to do degrees in the School of Social Studies and Comparative Studies. We feel that it's very different in many ways from the other two courses."

The senior lecturer said: "In each of the other two you have a vocational flavour obviously, in terms of the criteria by which you're selecting people, whereas this one—there really isn't that much experience around on something that's leading to a multi exitted way from foundation studies to higher education."

Nevertheless the university was quite clear that it was a new type of course offering a quite new mode of entry that they were looking for and rejected the two alternative models incorporating rather more traditional features.

The programme of study for the first year of the course will be an alternative means of entry to an honours degree course (in the School of Comparative Studies or the School of Social Studies) for students who have under-achieved in the normal education system. The alternative entry provision will not reflect a lowering of standards, but is intended to be an equivalent more suited to these students' needs.

The preparation course will differ from traditional 'A' level studies in that considerably greater emphasis will be placed on development of English language skills, numeracy, and study skills, to repair the effects of educational disadvantage; a less wide ranging syllabus will be covered. In addition close attention will be paid to the personal and psychological growth and change students are likely to require in order to adjust to the demands of a university course.

The standard aimed at on completion of the preparation year will be such as to enable students to undertake their honours degree course with the same prospect of success as those students who enter by traditional routes.

The curriculum proposed for the one-year university preparation course has a family resemblance to other parts of the Appendix II provision and communication skills and a workshop strategy are once more in evidence.

In view of the fairly fierce discussion that has arisen particularly among teachers of liberal studies over the justification of skills-based courses and their contrast with knowledge-based courses, the heavy bias towards learning and communication skills and other study and discipline skills in this preparatory course (70% of the whole) is a most interesting feature.

If this course can successfully recruit, if the selectors can establish clear and understanding criteria of disadvantage, on the one hand, and potential on the other, that will allow a reasonable identifiable and coherent body of students to emerge, and if those students then proceed to obtain reasonable degrees, not only will a viable path have been opened up into higher education but some pertinent questions will find a place on the agenda.

In addition to the original three courses at one further education college—two with a polytechnic, one with a university—there are others now in existence or at an advanced stage of planning, involving more colleges, polytechnics and universities.

There has been a certain reluctance on the part of some people not only in the colleges but it would seem in the administration to see this work as part of the Appendix II field. The staff inspector concerned is quite clear about the importance of including it not just as an administrative convenience but because it forms a coping stone to the rest of the Appendix II activity.

He saw the problem of developing special access courses—that is an alternative route with the special provision in Appendix II as its starting point—as an integral process with the development of Appendix II itself. The problems would occur not so much at the higher levels but at the lower levels.

"We have always been in the business of alternative routes and the easiest area, which presumably is why we started there, is at the highest level, where it is easier to demonstrate that in order to succeed in higher education you don't actually have to come by the 'A' level route. There are alternative ways of doing it.

"That's not really been too difficult, because the students there on access courses already display sufficient intellectual dexterity that anyone can see they'll make good teachers or social workers but for some reason or other they haven't got 'A' levels.

"It's going to be much more difficult to demonstrate that the youngsters who have under-achieved at school can be caused to perform competently, if alternative teaching strategies are employed and that they have sufficient intellectual capacity to become National Diploma and Certificate students".

It is not only in the colleges that a certain degree of scepticism exists about special access. While the universities and polytechnics who have negotiated the special access courses for teacher training, humanities and the social sciences are satisfied with the quality of the students coming forward—and this has been demonstrated in quite a practical way by the ultimate examination results—there has been considerable criticism of these courses from within further education itself, from schools— and perhaps in a rather more muted form—from within the authority's inspectorate.

When the opportunity to negotiate a special access course in science arose, some interesting attitudes were revealed. The college wanted to use staff who had general science qualifications and a good deal of experience teaching non-examination work, in opposition to inspectors who wished to locate the course in a college where there were more highly qualified scientists—specialist teachers of the main science subjects—with experience of 'A' level teaching. The objectors were either completely unaware of, or else rejected, the whole body of theoretical argument that supports the main curricular ideas of the development project and in particular the basic concept behind the creation of special access.

The Senior Lecturer (Appendix II) in the college concerned thought this incident exposed the essence of the dilemma. It demonstrated, in his view, the necessity for piecing together a clear profile of the intended students in terms of their social and learning needs and a corresponding profile of a teacher with skills, insights and experience to match. The objections from the science inspectorate represented the all too common experience of using a single yardstick for the measurement of competency for admission to the formal course that completely ignores the state of the learner. A similar yardstick will select a teacher. Yet there is really need for a yardstick to measure competence on the part of the teacher which will identify a range of skills and flexibility that many with excellent formal qualifications in their subjects may not in practice display.

But it is argued the need for special access does not exist only at the upper levels. There is a need for by-passing the formal hurdles at lower levels but doing it in such a way that the student can handle the course he eventually finds himself on. It is a difficult proposition but not an impossible one—as one or two examples demonstrate. The *Introductory Youth Community and Social Work* course offered in one college (and described in the CRCs book "A Second Chance") is a good example—by-passing 'O' and 'A' levels to provide a mode of entry to youth community and social work training in higher education.[17]

The staff inspector and his colleague responsible for access courses argue that one just has to convince people that the intellectual potential of the population of the inner city is adequate to sustain both these entry courses and the higher education courses. Is it an act of faith to believe that it is so?

"The fact that the inner urban population both socially and economically very depressed and deprived, is intellectually and practically as competent as that of a Bromley or Sutton is something which I think colleges have got to come to terms with.

"It is no more bizarre to assume that that is the case than it is to give our black kids intelligence tests from which they all come out as ESN. What's clearly at fault is not the kids but the tests. So I'm not going to suggest that we IQ test all our inner urban kids, but on the contrary we do accept as an article of faith that there is no evidence to show that in terms of intellectual potential depressed populations are less likely to show up well than populations in the lush pastures of Kent and Bromley."

To accept this proposition does not mean that all that intellectual ability is ready to be developed at 16+ or 18+—the assumption which would seem to underlie much of existing school curriculum. The ILEA inspector responsible "for facilitating access to higher education for those adults who may have the ability but lack the necessary qualifications" made the following point: "As well as different curricula for 16–19 year olds we also have to think about different patterns of provision because there may be other times in people's lives which may be more appropriate to learning than immediately post-school or at 18+."

The staff inspector accepted that though in logic there might be a case for a wholesale transformation of the curriculum at school level and in further education it was quite unrealistic to envisage any such possibility. Whether we are helping students to gain access to the middle ranges of further education or to higher education "we've still got to prepare students for operating successfully in what will be for the foreseeable future very conventional modes".

That statement sets some very realistic parameters upon the task of access courses at any level. One of its implications may be that it is wrong to think of rejoining mainstream education too soon and at too early a stage. The 'A' level stage may always be wrong for many of these students and perhaps may always need by-passing. It may be that the by-pass will lie outside most established formal educational institutions, as we are now accustomed to see them. Not only Unified Vocational Preparation but other developments in the industrial education and training field may mark stages on this road. The general report on the entry of young people into working life published by the OECD in 1977 hints strongly at this possibility.

"School is not the only place in which a general education may be acquired. Nor is it the only place to acquire a vocational training. On the contrary, experience shows that in a number of fields which are not amenable to formal academic methods but call for long experience of work the school cannot contribute a great deal. Schools have their limitations in this area and education cannot be considered to bear the entire responsibility for preparing young people for working life.

"It must also be emphasised that technical and occupational education is often seen as a dead end since it does not lead in practice to higher levels of education, particularly not to third level education. Here again, opinions may differ about what policies to adopt. It is generally agreed, however, that occupational upgrading should be made easier by means, for example, of a system of recurrent education."[18]

An answer needs to be given to the searching criticisms of those within and without the education system who appreciate the difficulty of retaining the academic hurdles of 'O' and 'A' levels lying across the path not only of fifth and sixth formers at secondary school but also of adult candidates for higher education however diverse their age experience and aptitudes may be, but remain sceptical of every alternative so far proferred. Unless a genuine alternative route emerges then whatever the intention and the hopes may be, the Appendix II provision is ultimately a cul-de-sac. It is a point well understood by members of the Project team as well as heads of department and teachers working in the colleges. They cannot attempt the task alone as its solution does not and cannot depend on what is provided in further education. One of the advisory teachers summed up the situation neatly and offered a possible perspective for the future:

"The Project has had its work cut out trying to establish a new type of course and I think it's far from finished. But I think that the opening up of a route is still one of the big impending questions isn't it? If Appendix II is unable to open up a route it will be seen for what it is, which is a short cut policy either back into unemployment or into jobs. I think it is vital that a picture of our learning through life, at later stages, is taken very seriously. I think it has implications for the access courses which we are conscious of. I think it also has implications for distance learning and flexi-learning and I think it has implications for the whole pattern of training opportunities as well as FE and I would have thought those three things offer more hope at the moment than cottoning on to the standard FE provisions, partly because it is the kind of provision it is and partly because of the financial obstacles that stand in people's way. It is easier to get into training than into FE; it's more easy to cope with training than to cope with FE; it's probably a more natural step for a lot of youngsters to take.

"If there were some systems that tied in training with flexi-learning and recurrent situations—oh yes, that's the missing context, isn't it?"

CHAPTER 8

The Action of the Authority

Section 1—The Threat of Re-organisation to Low Level Work

The London Authority has always had a strong commitment towards its low-level further education. In an attempt to protect it and to ensure its growth it fixed—back in the 1950s—a ceiling of GCE 'O' level or its equivalent for the local colleges. At first, especially with the prospect of County Colleges before them, staff in day colleges (as they were then called) accepted the ceiling willingly. As the County College dream receded, the economic significance of the ceiling was more clearly perceived and pressure grew to abolish it. In the euphoria of the 1960s when it seemed education could expand indefinitely and that whatever course was mounted students would come forward to fill it, many teachers believed and argued that it was possible to abolish the ceiling and still maintain the broad sweep of low-level work.

By the early 1970s general education and day-release courses were well into decline though demand for various forms of education was still buoyant. The polytechnics—ILEA have five of them and two more are on its borders—seemed to threaten some of the work of the area colleges mainly concerned with technical and commercial education, the latter believed themselves in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones. A policy was required either of closely associating colleges or even merging colleges. It was argued by most Principals of both day and area colleges and by the ATTI that every college should be allowed to expand to whatever level and range of work it was able to respond to. The break-up of the LCC education service, which appeared a possibility when the GLC was formed, would have brought about such a situation had the colleges been devolved on to the Boroughs without any effective regional systems of course approval at every level.

The dilemma facing one of the local colleges at the time was neatly summarised by its Principals:

"The college was basically a technical college in microcosm. Its problems stem really from one fact, that its heads of departments—three of them at least—had been there for something like fifteen years and there seems to have been an inevitable tendency for the college to go up-market. It's been trying all the time to become a bigger more normal technical college against the background of no money."

In the afterglow of 1960s optimism, the Haslegrave Report (and the consequential establishment of the Technician and Business Education Councils) might have appeared the right frame in which to remove the ceiling and to allow the free play of market forces. Undoubtedly, some courses and some students would have shifted from one college to another; there would have been much feverish activity but the total volume of relatively advanced work was not capable of indefinite expansion. In the long run—but the very long run—there might have emerged a streamlined, very effective and economic provision of the courses most clearly in demand. Almost certainly, there would have been a substantial loss of large parts of the corpus of low-level work which is taxing in terms of effort and motivation and which reaps little reward or status within the normal Burnham pattern. Whatever appeal this solution might have had to supporters of a market economy in education in the abstract, most close observers of the London scene would agree that it was not a recipe which in practice would provide the best educational solutions.

The alternative which was eventually recommended by the Review nevertheless caused the members of the authority some anxiety because of what has come to be known as "academic drift"—the tendency in any educational institution for a gradual discarding of work at its lowest level and its replacement by work at more advanced levels. A former member commented in these terms:

"One reason for the recommendations relating to Appendix II coming out at the same time as the re-organisation proposals was an attempt to allay the fears of members about what was going to happen to the less able. I'm sure it would not have got off the ground if there had not been political commitment. But the political commitment was to the low-achievers and not to the re-organisation."

Section 2—The Framework of Appendix II

The control most authorities exercise over their further education establishments is a negative one. Initiatives come from the college in response to demands from the community and the authority exercises an overall control by determining the size of the budget disposed of. Sometimes the college may be able to persuade an authority to give more funds for new work; alternatively, it has to discontinue something it is doing to finance new development. With Appendix II the ILEA began to experiment with a rather different pattern, the initiative being taken not by the college but by the authority: it began, as we have already seen, by its establishment and support of the Curriculum Development Project for Communication Skills.

But the Project by itself would make little progress if there were no clearly designated members of staff at the college to whom the team of advisory teachers could relate. The success of the Project has largely derived from its ability to build up a network of contacts across the colleges so that its curriculum thinking and mode of approach has had a firm basis at certain levels in almost every college. The authority helped the construction of this network considerably by its second safeguarding action taken independently of the first, but complementing it. It had already established in the local college, before the mergers, levels of senior staffing more favourable than the provisions of the Burnham report would have required to institutions dealing almost entirely with the work of the lowest level—category 5. Those posts were now confirmed and their numbers expanded.

A member of the review working party graphically described what he called "the birth of the concept of Appendix II" in which two, originally quite separate things became linked. "The one separate thing was the education and political priority given to the younger, less-able and less-advanced students, the second was the need to consider what to do about the favourable levels of senior staffing which has of necessity been applied in the former local colleges . . . fundamentally because of the organisation and administrative needs of the colleges. Effectively what the authority had to do was to say that senior staff, lecturers grade II and the very limited number of senior lecturers who had existed in the former local colleges, had to be fitted into the new larger colleges. Now at this point a quasi-administrative, quasi-educational, and much more political decision was taken to wrench the original purpose into a new direction and to say that those posts which had been established for administrative purposes should continue in the new larger colleges but with a specifically educational purpose. They should be attached to Appendix II work and that was the point at which the concept of Appendix II work emerged."

The authority also introduced some special structural features for all colleges—whether they had taken part in a merger or not. Most of the colleges ended up with more than one vice-principal. Following up a suggestion of Appendix II itself, every college was asked to designate a vice-principal who would have "special responsibility for the care and development of this work." Each college was offered a senior lecturer (Appendix II) working to the vice-principal whose first responsibility was to draw up a plan covering what was currently being offered at this level with suggestions as to how it might be developed. The precise role of the senior lecturer (Appendix II) varied from college to college and practice varied between colleges as to whether the senior lecturer was placed in a department or was free-standing and worked to the vice-principal and as to the kind of other duties he or she had to perform. It was an imaginative move and has produced some of the most fruitful results at college level.

A Principal who has been critical of some aspects of the staffing provisions of Appendix II spoke enthusiastically of the senior lecturer appointments.

"That was in my view one very positive good which came out of the designation of Appendix II as a thing in itself . . . I think to have put someone in each college with a quite specific remit fundamentally for curriculum development in an area which was greatly needing it—that was very good. Not all the individuals concerned may have been marvellous appointments, but I know of none where you did not get a considerable measure of dedication—whether efficiently organised or not."

The symbolic significance of these senior lecturers escaped everyone at first. It was one thing for the authority to declare its intention and establish its priority, but only when it was prepared to back its exhortation with a firm commitment of resources were its intentions taken seriously. Although the other staffing enhancements affected more people, the senior lecturer appointments caught people's imagination and demonstrated that the authority was in earnest. Even its officers were taken by surprise by the impact of this move: the authority's deputy education officer explained this in a talk he gave at the FE Staff College at Coombe Lodge.

"We then sought authority to appoint extra to establishment in any college which invited it a senior lecturer who was to work outside the normal departmental structure and to report to the academic board. Although we didn't see it that way at the time, I think—in retrospect—that the most important aspect of that decision has proved to be the fact that we were establishing senior lecturer posts for what is in almost all cases category 5 work. That had a great deal to do with the change in perception about the importance colleges placed on this work . . . the change in perception brought about by the appointment was far more significant than we realised at the time. We were appointing only one senior lecturer to a college but we didn't realise then just how significant this was to people engaged in this kind of work. It was certainly significant beyond the cost."[1]

As this makes clear, the initiative requesting a senior lecturer came from the colleges. The posts were not imposed by the authority but no college refused the offer. The authority suggested that a standing committee of governors or of the academic board be established in each college. This proposition met with a varying reception in the colleges. In colleges where there was little past experience of the work and the former practice of the senior college threatened to overwhelm that of the junior member, a watchdog could be useful in protecting the low-level work. In a college where the role of the academic board was limited and the staff were accustomed to a more autocratic stance by principal and heads of departments, a subcommittee's views might have little influence on practice: however much heat was generated in discussion, a committee of the governors might carry more weight. A further possible situation arose in those colleges where this area of work had been seen to be of major importance in one of the constituent colleges and where the academic board had played an effective part in the organisation of the curriculum. Since its view was regularly taken account of in the discussion on educational priorities, a move to set up an Appendix II Committee might well have been perceived as a way of removing this area of work from the central focus of the college's activity and thereby devaluing it. The practice of each college therefore varied and even where the external forms might appear identical, the reality might be in each case very different.

Section 3—"Putting your Money where your Mouth is"

One of the penalties ILEA suffers for being the largest education authority is a degree of unfair criticism. It may identify a problem and formulate its policy fairly quickly. Implementation may be slowed by sheer size and intractability. A smaller authority, taking longer to make up its mind, even making use of ILEA experience may appear to be more effective. Thus it is sometimes suggested as a former member put it "ILEA shouts its mouth off about what it is doing—but doesn't do!"

In her view, the Appendix II policy and the multi-racial initiative belied this canard. The energy and expertise of the officers and their undoubted commitment to these policies coupled to the enthusiastic support of members ensured a substantial movement on both these lines of policy. She exemplified what she meant:

"I mean the way elected members show their commitment is their willingness to put money into something—for example—the structure that was created to consciously upgrade low-level work."

The structure went beyond requesting that a vice-principal accept a special responsibility for low-level work and the gift of a senior lecturer extra to establishment. The enhancement of that establishment by a formula that not only went beyond the Burnham provision but was more generous than the establishment that previously applied to the local colleges for further education underlined the commitment of both officers and members. There was also a readiness on the part of the officers in the discussion of staffing estimates to improve staffing ratios at the request of the college for any work that fell into the Appendix II category.

These latter two developments in staffing proceeded in rather different ways. An officer closely associated with both the re-organisation and the continuing flow of resources into Appendix II work, explained that the special staffing arrangements did not operate simply through a more favourable student staff ratio for this range of work.

"Although we use the term staff-student ratio in Appendix II itself, we don't operate a defined staff-student ratio for college establishments. We were more concerned with what sort of grading of posts would be preferable for this kind of work".

The system of enhanced posts at Lecturer II level was calculated on the formula that related to all the work up to and including GCE 'O' level ("C" level work in the, then, current Burnham jargon).

"In our letter to the colleges we explained that though it was based on all "C" level work it was intended to be used for Appendix II which was not the same thing . . . The lower-level work? yes but it did not exlude the people doing the servicing and remedial work on 'O' level. Though 'O' level itself wasn't what we were talking about. People did not cotton on. We had to write twice, in fact we wrote quite a complicated letter in 1975 picking up all the various problems."

In many colleges at first the concept of deliberately rewarding the very lowest levels of work was at such variance with traditional Burnham thinking and its mode of calculating establishments that some colleges could not fully comprehend the authority's intention. Even where it was understood and the Principal and hierarchy were sympathetic, it was not always possible to implement the enhancement precisely in the spirit of Appendix II, even while observing the formal considerations, because of some difficult situations obtaining in the post-merger phase of some colleges. The passage of time and the vigilance of the inspectorate—and of NATFHE branches—has worked to rectify some of the more glaring inconsistencies.

The formula had to be changed because the Burnham Committee improved its own formula and when, in 1978, the Committee still further increased its provision of posts for low-level work by 10%, ILEA also increased its numbers of Lecturer II posts by 10%. How long this process of keeping ahead of Burnham will remain economically possible for ILEA it is difficult to predict but the stimulus it has given to this range of work in London's colleges has been remarkable. Thus the improved staffing at the lower levels has made a significant impact on teachers' morale. It also had an inevitable effect on cost. Though precise figures are hard to come by, it would appear that while the number of teachers has grown and the number of student hours gone up, the number of students has actually gone down and that implies smaller staff student ratios.

It is also a reflection of the practice often referred to by members of the curriculum development project as "double staffing". The rather casual use of this phrase has been misleading and has lead to misunderstanding in those colleges or departments within colleges where it has not been a normal practice. It is not used by the officers responsible for the estimates at County Hall and they see it as a dangerous and emotive term, suggesting a wasteful use of resources. If the term meant what it might appear to mean—two teachers engaged with one group performing identical tasks which normally one teacher would be expected to perform—it would be a practice difficult to justify.

Was there ever a planned decision to double staff?, an officer was asked. "It was a planned decision to put more resources into low-level work," he replied "and over several years we have ploughed fairly substantial sums into low-level work as such—and that certainly was a planned decision. I am not conscious of working under any plan that says we double staff. What we try to do is to make an honest assessment of what the particular needs are at a particular moment of the courses and give the college the resources to fit them. What we mean is that if a course has to break down into small groups because of its nature, one allows for staffing appropriate to that. I don't like the term "double staffing" because it sounds as if we've gone right overboard and that is not what we are trying to do at all."

What the Authority is concerned to ensure is that resources are adequate for small-group teaching in those situations in which small-group work or individualised-learning systems are appropriate. In any event, attempts by the Authority to specify detailed staffing arrangements are difficult.

"We tend to fall back on what was our traditional system of strengthening the college establishment generally and saying we hope this will help you to cope with the things you've been talking about."

This practice leaves the initiative for development clearly with the college. There is no direct influence on the college from above though resources may be forthcoming for approved projects. If the Authority wishes to stimulate something new, as we have seen, it comes along a different channel for example, through the inspectorate or the Curriculum Development Project. In the last resort if a college was unwilling to use the resources available in the way favoured by the advisory service, it would not have to accept them. It would still not necessarily be denuded of resources for other initiatives it might wish to undertake, though it would have to make a strong case.

Nevertheless the growth of low-level work, influenced very much by the Curriculum Development Project, has presented the Authorities' officers with a quite new perspective. In his Coombe Lodge talk the then Deputy Education Officer of the ILEA commented on this: "Another surprise we have had in the Appendix II area was the fact we have had to spend money without the usual numerical return. The latest revenue estimates docment said in a comment underneath the total volume of work figures for London's FE programme expressed in student hours "the revised estimate for 1977/78 and the estimate for 1978/79 reflects the fact that some of the new courses, being developed for less-advantaged students, require smaller teaching groups and are offered for less than a full session.

"The estimate 1977–8 included provision for some additional resources in order to encourage further growth of the lower level of work. The estimates for 1978–79 make provision for consequential costs for these additional resources and for further additional resources."

"There has been a significant measurable effect on the ratio of student-hours to teaching resources, of which Appendix II work is the biggest single determinant we have been able to isolate. We were deploying more out of other areas. It is a real problem to know just how far you can responsibly go in what amounts effectively to a reduction of average class-size."[2]

While there is the hint of a warning contained in the last sentence the ultimate decision "how far can you responsibly go" is at bottom a political decision involving a value judgement which it is proper for the members of the authority to make, after receiving the advice of the officers.

Table VI shows the expenditures upon the development of low-level work actual and potential between 1976 and 1980. In addition to the sums included in the table a sum of £35,000 (£60,000 in the full year) had been set aside for the reorganisation of some larger general education departments.

Expenditures of this order are not accidental. They reflect the authority's real concern for the less-able, the disadvantaged, the physically and mentally handicapped. It may sometimes find its expression in some very odd ways, but in the words of a member of the authority:

"Some of it came off and some of it didn't. I think Appendix II in the FE sector is the real success story. . . The decision was taken consciously at political levels. When I say that I don't mean that every half member of staff was checked at member level because it doesn't operate like that. When budget decisions were being taken, they were taken consciously and money was deliberately allocated for Appendix II. It was a conscious, deliberate decision taken by the members at budget time"

TABLE VI

Education Expenditure on Development of Low Level Work 1976–80

Year	Financial Year	Full Year
1976–77	305,000	—
1977–78	200,000	352,000
1978–79 (original)	175,000	300,000
(supplementary)	205,400	482,000
1979–80 (estimate)	180,000	380,000

Section 4—The Operation of Positive Discrimination

The implementation of the recommendations of Appendix II is a firmly established policy of the ILEA. If the long period of steady growth in education during the 50's and 60's had continued without check into the 70's and 80's no difficulties would have arisen however generous the ILEA may have been in funding low-level courses. The first checks to the progress of growth came just at the moment when reorganisation was beginning. The record exhibited in Table II is thus the more creditable when one considers it would have been very easy and would have appeared not at all unreasonable to shelve the commitments made to disadvantaged students on the grounds of economic difficulties and to postpone action indefinitely. In a period of no-growth and later of cutbacks for a sector of work to continue to be supported at the level shown in Table VI indicates not only the authority's commitment to this area of work but its willingness to retrench in some other quarter. If a comparable level of expenditure is to be maintained in the future, even if there is no further expansion in the present climate, a substantial measure of positive discrimination, requiring the diversion of resources away from other possible items of expenditure in favour of this area of work, will have to be undertaken.

As we shall see, there is some measure of disagreement as to the amount of positive discrimination that has so far taken place. Nevertheless, one could characterise what has happened to date as an effort on the part of three rather different groups of people to shift the balance of existing provision in favour of sections of the population normally excluded from it. They are the members of the authority, its officers and inspectors, and principals and teachers in the colleges.

Developing a neglected area of work during a period of restricted or even shrinking resources requires a justification and some relatively firm limits to the development to be undertaken. The rationale developed by each of the three groups is likely to be different and the order of priorities of each group is also likely to be different.

The members will be motivated by political considerations. The justification for their actions and their range of priorities should be viewed against the spectrum of wider consideration involving the community on whom their tenure of office depends and their interpretation of its needs. We have had some indication of how the authority has so far seen its priorities. The officers, while having to interpret the broad policies and preferences of their masters and translate them into administrative realities, have also to take account of the whole range of the authority's provision and sustain to the best of their ability a balanced flow of resources into each area. They have also to remind members of important, but perhaps less prominent, sectors that may be forgotten if too much attention is concentrated on those projects closest to the members' hearts.

In the colleges "educational" priorities rule but what constitutes "educational" may turn on the training and experience of those using the term. Where growth is always accompanied by additional resources, agreement on educational issues is readily achieved in the college. Where an academic board has no voice in the ordering of priorities or the distribution of resources, it will readily agree to anything, knowing that the real issue will be determined elsewhere and that no bids should be eliminated at so early a stage. Where the board has a significant part to play in establishing priorities and knows that its priorities are the ones that will have the strongest claims on resources, it not only will behave in a more responsible way but it will become the focus of the discussion.

At each level there has been some misunderstanding over low-level work and some sluggish response. Differences of view have been expressed over the extent and degree of commitment and resource backing and to what degree its claims should be protected from or advanced beyond the claims of other sectors. There has also been a small but vigorous opposition, most clearly perceived at the level of the college because there it is most articulate and effective.

A matter that has occasioned fierce discussion at each level, even if in rather different terms, has been the limits to positive discrimination. How far was it justified to transfer resources from a previously well-funded area into Appendix II? Such a policy could take two forms. The more moderate is the deflection of limited resources which became available to a selected area, rather than allocation according to a traditional scale of priorities. The second is the deliberate cutting back of expenditure in one sector in order to expand another. That some measure of positive discrimination has taken place seems apparent from the phrase "We were deploying more out of other areas" and the context suggests that this has special reference to staffing and was result of action taken at college level.

A firm declaration of principle by members of the authority was essential to ensure that effective action was taken. The expansion of low-level courses and of support activity for Appendix II students represents a significant input of resources but it is not quite clear precisely where they were transferred from. Officers agree that there was a definite reduction of staffing in some polytechnics by a process of natural wastage and the process of very careful scrutiny of all vacancies that occurred and all new appointments. But it would be difficult to trace any savings made there directly to any re-investment in priority activities of the authority such as Appendix II.

A senior officer agreed that the decision to reduce overseas student numbers was an act of positive discrimination. "That was a definite policy by the members because they realised they weren't going to have the space to deal with the developments they thought were needed for Inner London and they saw the limitation on overseas students as one way of dealing with it." Overseas student numbers were expanding and the authority could not accommodate them at the same time as the new range of low-level courses within the budget they were prepared to spend.

As for the rest of the authority's further education provision, there has never been a policy decision taken to reduce certain sectors of activity to allow others to grow and the authority's officers are at pains to make clear that it is not how they work. Curricular decisions must be taken at college level. The authority, it is maintained, does not fund particular courses. The ultimate distribution of resources is an internal college affair even though their own claim on the authority will be based on the sum of the requirements of individual courses and the authority has an expressed policy of assisting growth at the lower levels. Even so Appendix II is not treated in isolation.

"I do think it is something that the members particularly want to give priority to," said an officer explaining the process, "and therefore inevitably it tends to be looked at rather separately by us as we're having to divert resources in that way. But I don't think it is something that has to be kept separate. And I am often conscious of the problem colleges must have in maintaining their balance. Colleges do say, don't they? 'We're getting these requests for particular vocational courses of a day-release character which you presumably still want to support.' And the resources that the authority has been giving have not been so precisely attached to Appendix II as to exclude the general level of work in the 16–19 range so that we have been able to give help in some cases which hasn't been strictly Appendix II."

In the colleges the picture was rather different. New work opened up and some work which had been well established dwindled away. To the average teacher the actual reasons for a particular course being undersubscribed, and perhaps even disappearing, were not always clear. It may have been that turning off the tap of the supply of overseas students occasioned the decline; it was often because firms that had been local supporters of long-established courses closed, moved from the district, or changed their character. Even if the firm retained its building, it might no longer use it for manufacturing, assembling or even warehousing. This has been particularly marked in engineering and has led to a substantial slump in engineering courses of all kinds and at all levels.

A change of use of accommodation is one of the most potent symbols in colleges of transfer of resources and possibly positive discrimination. One college lost both its engineering workshops from some new extensions in 1971 because the engineering courses it was counting on evaporated. One workshop was converted to a community education unit, the other to a student common room. The wound still rankles nine years later in the department concerned but the message was crystal clear. It is not always easy to affect such a shift in resources. As one principal of a college spread over three sites commented: "Cutting down on overseas students at Pitfield Street, doesn't make any more room at Jubilee Street." In a more compact college the effects may be different.

Discussing the cut in overseas students numbers an officer put the issue fairly succinctly:

"If your overseas students were in very specialised areas you haven't got much saving of space and you have an engineering workshop on your hands that's used less than before. Even that however may not be true, because you may be drawing on it for tasters or sampling courses or link courses or something of that kind."

Whether these options are taken depends on qualities of imaginative leadership and the willingness of teachers to respond and perhaps to change their role. Certainly one major college that is suffering both a contraction of demand because of the flight of engineering from the capital and from a reduction of overseas intake is making a most effective response in the development of its range of low level courses. Individual members of staff who had already established a commitment to the lower-achieving craft students are now able to come into their own with the development of new courses: "I can think of one chap" said the Inspector "who faithfully and without any tangible reward involved himself in in-service training for several years—he's in electrical installations work—until eventually he got his promotion" (a Lecturer II under the Appendix II provision) "and now he's in charge of a multi-skills workshop and its going like a bomb with the Introduction to Work courses under his guidance."

The situation is not quite so easily resolved in every college. Even where there is a sharp decline of demand, unless there is an overtly expressed will in the college to match the will of the authority a fall in the traditional work of a department or a sector of the department is not automatically taken up by expanding the work at lower levels. It is in this area of ensuring that spare capacity and unused resources are taken up quickly and used to good effect that the senior lecturers (Appendix II) and the Vice Principals they work to can be most effective.

Some college principals believe the system of course approval operated by the authority's officers was linked with resource distribution and was therefore a method of ensuring that in the Appendix II area at least that new courses would exhibit the curriculum development features favoured by the Curriculum Development Project. This was not upheld in County Hall. It was very firmly stated that the resources granted to the college were for the work of the college as a whole and not earmarked for Course A, Course B and so on; it would be quite impracticable for the authority to do otherwise. There was no truth, generally speaking, in the fairly widespread belief that a course approval carries with it a packet of resources. The officer I spoke to did concede there were two situations in which the authority's action did give the confusing impression it that was making a practice of funding individual courses with the implied corollary that such courses had to meet curricular criteria established by the authority's inspectorate. The major cause of this confusion has been the funding of work undertaken on behalf of the Manpower Services Commission. Outside London the practice seems mainly to have been that the deal was struck between the local office of the Training Service Division of the MSC and the college and the courses had been individually funded. In consequence, if additional staff appointments are necessary they are made usually on a temporary basis. Similarly, accommodation if necessary and teaching material are paid for on an ad hoc basis. Sometimes a college has received the full benefit of the additional input, especially where it has dealt with the TSD. Elsewhere the authority has held back some of the income from the MSC, ostensibly to cover the overheads for which it is responsible.

ILEA's practice has been different. While the colleges may deal directly with the TSD the funding is to the authority which then disburses it to the colleges. As the funding is for individual courses, and colleges have been able to bargain for additions to full-time staff and accommodation on the strength of this work, the courses have had to meet criteria agreed by the TSD and the authority and this has allowed a detailed degree of control over college provision that is technically lacking elsewhere.

A further event has encouraged some principals to perceive a Machiavellian strain in the officers' dealings with the colleges and this has been the occasional discovery of a windfall. "Sometimes the Committee had found during the course of the year that they could devote more money to the sixteen-to-nineteens . . . we tended to disburse that money in relation to particular course approval applications that had come in, the kinds that said for example, "We could run this, if we had extra resources." In other words the colleges would spend their money to get something extra. Once again at college level it looks as if we were resourcing individual courses."

As in both the latter case and that of TSD funded courses inspectors or advisory teachers associated with the Curriculum Development Project have acted for the Authority in negotiations over content, method and curriculum design, this special funding has played an important part in promoting the particular strategies and educational concepts evolved in and around the Project. While those who have benefited from the process are not unduly hostile to the procedure, other colleges who have not been successful in their bids are more critical. Some of them may believe they have been disregarded because their thinking is cast in too traditional a mould, others because their favoured developments may go beyond the new orthodoxy of the Project's thinking. In either case the issue is a delicate one and calls for the utmost tact if the authority and its officers are to maintain harmonious relations with the colleges and, at the same time, the Authority's bold drive to provide an education with real meaning for the neglected sector of the sixteen-to-nineteen age group is to be sustained.

Section 5—Policies—Did ILEA mean it?

For an education authority to take the protective action that the ILEA did in its Appendix II Policy reveals a sensitivity and concern that is most admirable. For it to continue to put resources into the provision for the 16–19s and especially into the lower-level sector during a rapidly cooling economic climate such as the last six years expresses not only wisdom but courage. And to stand by those commitments at a time of severe restraint and to seek other places in which to make the inevitable cut-backs shows a considerable degree of political will.

It is not only the members who display courage under such circumstances. It would be very easy for officers to pursue a more popular line with principals and the bulk of the teachers in the colleges, restraining the development of the low-level work, giving a little encouragement to the expansionist aims of those hoping to establish new advanced courses, or just standing by what already exists. To give a lead to the colleges to go out to meet real need where it exists in its most acute form which is what the authority conceives its policy to be, and loyally to insist on as strict an interpretation as is reasonable calls for the highest qualities in a local government service and deserves recognition.

Officers and inspectors play a crucial role in this matter. While members may have the power to say "yea" and "nay", the fact that they are lay persons in a professional field limits their ability to prescribe precise nostrums to cure the complaints they may well be able to detect. The symptoms are often very clear to members but diagnosis and the prescription of remedy is necessarily beyond them. As one of them remarked "in detailed terms the curriculum isn't really understood at that level unless people have been teachers and then it tends just to be their own subject or area that they know about. Sometimes there is a feeling that things are not right but, in the main, curriculum development has got to come from the bottom.

"Some of us are very conscious of what is not being done which is not the same thing as being able to say what ought to be done."

A question that arises from this statement is "Did the members know enough?" Funding Appendix II, especially if it is at the expense, or even appears to be at the expense, of any other area of activity is capable of becoming a major political issue. If, in a deteriorating economic situation, a political decision is taken to stand by the commitment it becomes necessary not only to know the broad policy but to have some grasp of the details of the situation.

A close observer of the scene from an educational institution not directly involved commented:

"One of the things which does strike me is that the Authority's commitment to Appendix II is more of a commitment to a group of youngsters as a political problem than to a set of aims and ideals in a curriculum sense.

"In other words, the Authority is saying "Yes, we must do something for these youngsters—none too well qualified, unemployed, probably deprived." That's fine. But in terms of saying "Here's a group of such youngsters and these are the things we should be doing for them"—it's the second part of the equation which seems to me to be very fuzzy. Perhaps quite rightly. This is presumably why you do have individual colleges responding in rather different ways to what is seen by the Authority as essentially the same problem."

In a period of expansion that is clearly a reasonable attitude to adopt and it represents the regime which further education colleges—and not only in ILEA—have lived for a very long time. If there was work to be done, the college went out and did it, and only very rarely were the resources not forthcoming to meet the new commitment. But now when this system can no longer apply and when the authority is prepared to transfer resources to the areas it has diagnosed as of greatest need, does it not become necessary for members to know more precisely what are the facts that govern the options and for some members at least, to know not only through the officers but at first hand?

It is a fact known by anyone who has served on a local authority and not remained blinkered throughout his period of office that members of the general public and the rank and file of council employees do not distinguish to any extent between members and officers. "Things done by a council" represent not only the political acts of the council but the actions of senior staff, individual health inspectors, clerks, teachers and dustmen. While these visible representatives of the Authority have often to face public reaction to unpopular decisions from the top—like bus conductors when fares rise—some members have to carry the responsibility for the actions of their officers and their subordinates. As far as the public are concerned, an amorphous "they" are responsible for the full range of activities performed in the Authority's name, and teachers in schools and colleges have the same perception of "the Authority" as members of the general public.

Thus an important departure like the Curriculum Development Project with a primary impact in its immediate activity and a more pervasive secondary impact as its influence flows along the network cannot and should not operate without the knowledge and recognition of members (as well as officers and inspectors) because members will receive the ultimate commendation or blame, and mistakes could be either wasteful or expensive. On the other hand, arbitrary action, apparently quite reasonable but based on inadequate information and little understanding of how the project works, could lead to relatively small but quite crippling savings that could put the whole of its work at risk.

How essential is the Curriculum Development Project to the success of Appendix II? How essential is each element of the Project itself? Can it afford to lose a typewriter or a photocopier from among its resources? Or even perhaps, the opposite, would it be more economic and more effective actually to increase its resources if youth unemployment is to rise, and new pressures are likely to be put on the colleges? These and similar questions are urgent and pressing, of importance not only to the Project itself, and those immediately associated with it, but to members of the Authority as well.

It is not easy to define precisely what information, especially what first-hand information, needs to be in the possession of members in view of the vast range of topics covered by a sub-committee like ILEA's Further and Higher Sub-Committee, let alone the full committee of the authority itself. But in view of the urgency and the importance of the many-faceted problems of the 16–19 age-group and particularly that section of it that has so far met with least success in life or welcome into adult status, it would seem at the very least that members must be assured that the resources they are offering are adequate and that they are being well spent.

Section 6—Policies—Not Everyone likes Appendix II

In spite of the extensive growth of low-level courses over the last six years, it would be rash to conclude that this was an expansion welcomed by every principal and all the senior staff of every college. However, because of the firm interpretation of the Authority's policy maintained by the officers, whatever mutterings may take place in conference bars late at night, when two or three principals are gathered together, their public statements are muted and open opposition rarely, if ever, expressed. Nevertheless, what is said, is said with feeling, and with a strength of feeling that needs to be observed.

Principals, by and large, are responsible people and do not wilfully flout Authority policy. They also recognise a commitment to their existing body of work and the students involved in it and a loyalty to their staff who have spent in numerous cases many years patiently building up that work. It is bad enough when some catastrophic event such as the move of a major employer away from the area wrecks a whole structure of carefully constructed courses.

Even with the generous staffing arrangements agreed by the Authority, Appendix II does not yet seem to many teachers to offer the same prospects as the traditional pattern of work and their attitudes are cautious for both personal and professional reasons.

But the definition of what counts as low-level work, falling within the Appendix II remit, becomes a matter of concern. A principal of a college, which had a good record of success in technical and business studies and a reasonable spread of all levels of work, including the lower levels, but which had largely avoided the new special courses developed under Appendix II stated his credo:

"I believe that young people of all ages have the right to be educated, but the Appendix II people tend to lump the under-achievers into one group when basically there are four or five different groups within the under-achievers and the one that we must be concerned about—not educationally but socially—are the ones that the educationalists can't get hold of. If we try to get hold of them and to bring them into the colleges they don't like it; they want to get out and they create problems for the colleges. Basically I see that as the problem—it is one calling for *social* education, rather than any other kind."

This is a diagnosis which would not be entirely rejected by many of those working in the Appendix II field, especially those who look to counselling-based alternatives. Where a disagreement would lie is in the disassociation of the college from any enterprises in the field of what this principal calls "social" education. They would also dissent from his belief that resources allocated for innovative work with under-achieving students should be diverted back into traditional course provision.

He expressed the frequently heard view that the major investment of resources should be in support of what he called "the second-chancers"—those capable of "O" level but who have been prevented by circumstance from taking it. He predicted that too great an investment of resources in work of a more radical kind would produce a sharp re-action form students and staff on traditional courses "who are doing and have been doing for a long time an excellent job".

These statements are very cautious; one needs to listen carefully to hear what is being said. So far, the developments he is discussing are growth items. As the Authority has been in a phase of standstill or minimal growth Appendix II courses have not yet grown at the expense of other courses, though they may have grown instead of other courses. This principal is sounding a warning note about possible consequences if the stage were reached in which other existing work were to be cut back to ensure the continuance of further growth of low level work. That choice may, however, be a political necessity for any Authority to make.

There is one sense in which it could be argued that stage has already been reached and so far colleges have tended to solve the problem in their own way. It is relatively easy from year to year, if the flow of income is sufficient, for the Authority to turn on and off the tap of money, equipment and teaching staff. A much more intractable resource is accommodation and most colleges have long reached a position where their buildings are fully committed. Almost any change of use of a room will have an effect on what is taught and how much is taught in the college. This is true whether it is a conversion of office to classroom, classroom to office, or of a general purposes room into specialist accommodation such as a drawing office, language laboratory or communications workshop. While a new low-level course may bring its own resources including the teachers, it may have to take up space formerly occupied by another course which will have to adapt, amalgamate with something else or be discontinued.

Thus at the level of the colleges there has been some criticism. Even though no redundancies have occurred, a shift of focus in the work of a department or a section of a department may be interpreted as a "cut" and strongly resented. For a climate in which any "cut" is an emotive issue, fully responsible and educationally justifiable changes in the pattern of work may be objected to under a slogan of "resistance to all cuts". Ironically the innovation may actually be costing the authority more but the word "cuts" will still be employed.

Section 7—Policies—A Second Chance

At a later hour in the evening at what might euphemistically be called a fringe meeting at a recent education conference, some London principals were discussing Appendix II and the resource problems touched on in the last chapter. At length, a member of the group who came from outside London said "You know, my impression is that Appendix II, is simply a euphemism to describe what ILEA is doing to meet the West Indian problem." He was assailed by some of his London colleagues for his terminology and a debate then ensued as to whether and to what degree ethnicity constitutes "a problem". Black students might well claim they have a practical problem arising from racialist attitudes on the part of members of the host population but the fact of race itself is no problem. As for racialism, they can neither be held responsible for, nor can they do very much about, the attitudes held by other people, except to escape the effect of having such attitudes projected upon them.

"We do not control the images that go out about ourselves," said a black teacher, "the danger is the kids play up to the images and there is a danger that *we* may interpret ourselves through *their* images."

One of the persistent complaints that one hears is that part of this image is that of under-achieving student. It is alleged the following stereo-typed situation arises. The student, reacting against the cultural assumptions of the teacher, switches off, "truants in the head". The image thus projected, that of a listless and bored youth, is accepted and the teacher lowers his expectations. The teacher blames the pupil and his lack of ability, of the will to work and of language. The parents on the other hand and members of the black community blame the teachers for not being able to sustain the interest of their pupils and to teach them in a clear and systematic fashion.[3]

The elements of a pragmatic approach to meet the needs of under-achieving students are spelt out at the end of Chapter Two. The first part of that formula would seem to be common ground both to courses provided under the Appendix II programme and the kind of GCE course that is often seen to be its alternative. "Students of this type will tend to perform more effectively if they are working within a firmly defined framework, responding to teachers within a relation of mutual trust and respect on courses of an integrated character that have clear objectives relating to ends the students accept as relevant to their lives and situation." It is in the addendum to that statement that differences appear. It goes on; "(courses) in which there is a substantial amount of practical activity (not necessarily involving manipulative skills) and which are consistent with an overall strategy of limited objectives—a series of clear immediate goals leading to more distant but nevertheless real and attainable goals."

It is the strategy of limited objectives which is suspect. It is easy to say that the immediate goals can lead on to ultimate goals but, it is argued, the curbing of immediate aspiration may lead to a dimming of perspective and effectively bar any real further progress. There is in consequence a strong body of opinion that holds the view that to abandon the academic route is to abandon the possibility of reaching positions of status in society. This is not quite the same argument as that of other critics, who see the "new curriculum" as a form of disarming the workers as a class. Its more immediate concern is with the social mobility of individuals, though some of its advocates do look to a common curriculum that might help bring about and consolidate an integrated society.

Considerable scepticism is shown by some black teachers and community workers over new syllabuses and some would include Appendix II courses in their general condemnation. "Oh, yes," said one, "there are other things they get them to do—Task Force work, painting old people's homes, or taking them out to show them how to use the Underground (I think they call that social studies) or showing them the local area, how they are going to redevelop it, but the last thing they do is to take them, sit them down and teach them systematically for examinations . . . every effort is made to legitimise the reluctance of the teachers to teach the black child."

Strong words, but understandable when one recognises the power of certification in our society and the excessive importance paid to the acquisition of paper qualifications.

The fundamental argument advanced by these critics is that the only route to positions of high status, of real power and authority in the country is through achievement first in academic examinations at school or college, followed by higher education. Those people who are debarred from this route either through selection, or through bad or neglectful teaching, or through low attainment due to the socio-cultural gap, have no chance of success in any orthodox fashion. Sport, the pop scene, and crime are the only realistic alternative routes to the top.

It is, therefore, argued that not to allow young people to "have their shot" at GCE subjects, is to deprive them of their one chance of breaking out of their confined life of low economic and social status. Even if you are able to offer them something they may do better at, they themselves are likely to reject it because they know it will not lead them where they want to go.

Thus, however carefully constructed Appendix II courses are and whether in the form of vocational preparation or general education courses that can lead either into education or into work and whatever new and appropriate pedagogy may be employed, they may encounter difficulties in carrying any conviction and attracting those students who most need education because they do not appear a genuine route to the forms of certification that carry most social approbation.

A black teacher said he could not believe in the kind of hybrid general education course which offered both a possible route to GCE 'O' levels and also a measure of vocational preparation.

"My guess is that in practice it hasn't proved very successful as yet. That might be an argument for making it clearer what it is all about. I used to think a college like this could combine the two things quite easily but I am not sure now we can do it. Its very much like the old separation into secondary modern and grammar school. Because what you eventually come to is that this course is a microcosm reflecting the world picture and you have to separate because that's the way it is outside."

He echoed calls which have been made elsewhere for a clear and limited curriculum in a group of basic subjects which were recognised as constituting the minimum all young people should learn. He believed that if these were taught systematically with a view to passing a formal examination in each subject, if a strict and firm discipline were established and, above all, regular and persistent attendance were insisted on, then the young people would learn. He agreed that because of unsatisfactory earlier experiences, what is now offered as a one year's course might take one, two or even, in some cases, three years to achieve.

"What I would like to try is to take these people and put them not necessarily on vocational courses but into general education courses and convince them. It may take them three years before they even get a set of 'O' levels but a reasonably well-defined course with well defined methods, with teachers who are prepared to see young adolescents beginning their secondary education should have a strong chance of success."

There are three objections that could be raised against such a proposition, the first two practical, the third sociological. To select people whose experience of the academic route has already been unsatisfactory, who may as a result have acquired psychological and emotional blocks that will impede their progress and then to concentrate sufficient time and resources to get over the hurdles to reach a sufficient number of 'O' levels to make sense to an employer or to gain entrance to a higher course, is likely to be a costly process and it may be difficult to justify the logistics.

The record of 'O' level courses in London colleges demonstrates both points—with persistence and good teaching and sufficient time some of the most unlikely candidates can eventually obtain an adequate range of GCE successes, enter higher education and obtain degrees. At the same time a majority of students embarking on such courses, even with good support but with little previous success in this field, will drop out early on or fail the examinations. To have acquired one or two 'O' levels by the time you are 19 or 20 is an achievement of dubious value in the job market. It may be regarded even by the student himself not as a positive achievement but as a reinforcement of failure. How far should an education authority go in underwriting the cost of such courses because they produce a small number of successes?

The second objection is rather different. "This is the predicament the youngsters are in", said a head of department discussing what kind of courses should be available, "Whatever reasons have conspired to ensure they have such a low attainment at 16, whatever provision is made, it is unlikely that most of them will suddenly make the spurt to catch up with their peers, so they are always going to lag behind when trying to get into established courses or into employment."

The third point is more theoretical, but would seem to be borne out by London's experience. The OECD report "Entry of young people into working life" says: "Certain critics feel that the diversification of education leads to social selection and that in the interests of equality of opportunity everyone should share the same educational experience, especially during the period of compulsory schooling. It has been noted, however, that this policy may increase the handicap of those young people who are least able to master abstract subjects or who belong to under-privileged groups."[4]

Though these two groups are not identical, they do overlap—as much of the literature on the subject demonstrates. An abstract equality of provision is not equal if the parties receiving it bring different quantities of understanding to it and are at different stages of readiness for what they are to receive. Some of it they may never be ready to receive.

The result is spelt out in another part of the same report:

"The majority of young people have no fixed occupational goals. Their academic orientation is largely predetermined by factors which are beyond their control or that of their parents. It is therefore not difficult to explain the influence of school values and the consequences of a marking system based on essentially academic criteria and to recognise that the choice of occupational outlets at secondary level stems more from rejection or elimination than true vocational choice[5]

Section 8—Policies—"An Education that makes Sense"

One of the claims advanced for the particular curriculum recommendations contained in "Half our Future" was that they added up to "an education that makes sense".[6] Whether that claim still stands up after more than 15 years is open to question but the aim was a sound one. The constituency that report was concerned with and the students who are the subject of this one have much in common in terms of learning characteristics and social circumstance. Newsom was seeking a formula that would speak to their condition. A problem its proposals ran into and which has not been adequately resolved in secondary education is the structure of the school timetable which itself derives from the universal belief that what happens in school must mainly be the teaching of subjects. It is not merely an idea held by teachers; it is a firmly entrenched belief in the public mind—parents, employers and administrators alike—and therefore curriculum proposals for changing the frames of knowledge are met with sceptical comment. And yet it may be necessary to change those frames if our type of student is to make adequate progress.

It has been argued by some critics of the curriculum that teachers tend to structure the knowledge they import "in ways that may make it remote from everyday experience".[7] Thus a child to do well must often put aside what he has learnt from everyday experience, and children who have a ready facility for doing so may come to be regarded as more educable or even of higher ability. The Newsom recipe for "relevance" was intended to counter this tendency. One of the ways in which "teachers structure knowledge . . . in ways that make it remote from everyday life" is through the invention of subjects which require to be taught separately because nowadays to teach a subject one has to be a specialist. In order to allow this process to take place, to give a proper allowance of time to teach "their" subjects and to ensure that time is fairly distributed, the standard form of timetable has been invented with its allocation of time to subjects, by hours, 45-minute periods, 35-minute periods, or even 30-minute periods. The fragmentation of knowledge is assured simply by the construction of the timetable. Newsom wanted something different from this but the demands of subject teaching in most places have been too great and only exceptionally have the flexible concepts of "Half our future" found a lasting place in the organisation of a secondary school.[8]

"Within academic education", writes Eric Robinson "everything is justifiable because the academic subject (although initially a pure creature of imagination and convenience) has become an end in itself—we learn it because it is there."[9]

Again Douglas Barnes writes:

"School subjects are not self-constituting; they were built up by man in the course of trying to make sense of some aspects of the world. Having built up a body of knowledge such as physics, or economics, or literary criticism, and having persuaded other people that this knowledge is valuable, the specialists discover that it gives them power . . . examinations play an important part both in giving accredited status to a body of knowledge and controlling students' access to qualifications in it."[10]

In a system in which the individual subject is dominant, academic courses in school or college—that is the normal kind we are accustomed for our children to pursue in school, college, or in higher education—do not aim to offer coherence. Where a "subject" is split into further divisions and taught by separate specialists there may be even less coherence and less inter-relation between the conceptual frames presented in the teaching. The integrating feature in theory is the intelligence of the learner, who gradually builds up his own world picture. In practice he usually remains in a state of what the psychologists call cognitive dissonance with incompatible concepts contained uneasily in elastic frames within the mind, sometimes a source of mental disturbance, sometimes barricaded from each other to permit the inconsistencies to survive. The integrating factor in normal forms of academic education is the examination and hence its importance in the scheme of things. In spite of all protestations it is not knowledge for its own sake that is the prime motivator for academic learning but the need to obtain an acceptable qualification. "Knowledge" in any real sense is a by-product.

While subject dominance is the natural outcome in a traditional secondary school setting, it is not necessarily so in further education where the vocational course can impose its own ends upon the subjects contributing to it. That is a possibility, it is seldom a reality. Not until the arrival of the BEC syllabuses has there been a sustained and coordinated attempt by an examining body to get any sector of a college to offer genuinely integrated courses by dividing the syllabus into inter-disciplinary modules and insisting on forms of assessment, the so-called "cross-modular assignments" which make the close cooperation of the teaching of different subjects inevitable.

The development of models offering integrated and coherent courses is a slow process and, while the ILEA Curriculum Development Project has made some progress towards it, it has found the two items mentioned above—the subject orientation of the teaching and the need for external certification—stumbling blocks, but blocks not impossible to remove.

The case for alternative modes of assessment was well argued in a succinct but effective paper presented at the ACFHE conference at Torquay in June 1978 by the staff inspector responsible for the ILEA curriculum development project.[11] He reminded his readers of the Norwood report which was concerned with curriculum and examinations in secondary schools and reported in 1941. It warned against: "a tendency to regard subjects as having claims in their own right both absolutely and in relation to others without real regard for the supreme consideration which is the special needs and special aptitudes and abilities of the pupils themselves.—Only the teacher can make a unity of the child's education in promoting the unity of his personality in terms of purpose. . . ."[12]

Great encouragement would be given to this movement for more realistic assessment if industry could state its requirements more accurately and more precisely. A TSA document states: "It is a safe bet that most entry qualifications (for jobs) expressed in terms of examination performances are the result of armchair deliberations rather than empirical investigation."[13]

It is that probability that endows such importance to the research of T. Townsend and M. Freshwater in connexion with MSC/ILEA Into Work Project in which they are making elaborate profiles of jobs and analysing them for the skills the jobs require in reality in contrast to the skills they are alleged to require. Already at a relatively early stage of research it is becoming clear that this process can lead to some substantial reassessment of the skills and qualities actually required for many jobs.

One principal suggested that we needed teachers of a different kind who were able to adopt a more integrated approach. "People who were into whole projects such as "we will build a car", or "we will build a motor bike". "Because the student knows what a car is, he learns theoretical aspects from *doing*. But I don't think most teachers could teach like that." His criticism of the curriculum Development Project was that they had concentrated on numeracy and literacy and not attempted to develop teachers who could display project-type skills and "who could work with a group of kids on a set of related theoretical issues that are derived from a practical concrete task."[14]

The production of teachers who possess "project-type" skills is likely to be a lengthy job if we are to wait on pre-service and in-service facilities developing. This is partly a problem of chicken and egg. The teachers will not be forthcoming unless there are projects to teach on. Projects cannot be mounted without well and correctly trained staff. The integrated pattern of course could wait a long time for fulfilment if it were to depend upon a sufficient supply of teachers capable of handling the kind of project the principal suggested.

A more modest aim is perhaps more feasible and already steps to meet it are in train. There is no way by which a teaching force can be created rapidly with a new outlook formed by a new kind of training in time to man the full range of courses and activities which the present situation urgently demands. As the subject dominance of the academic curriculum is likely to persist for a very long time and if programmes with an explanatory approach, with a new pedagogy and a workshop strategy are to be established, they must be established with the staff that we have now in the colleges, they cannot wait upon the appearance of the ideal teaching force.

The first step is to establish the aims and learning objectives derived from those aims for such courses. Each course will need a course tutor who understands what is required and is trained to run a team of teachers in a cooperative and participating pattern. He, without any sudden transformations, will set in motion the process of meeting regularly to discuss the course—before it is established, and subsequent to its establishment—to consider its progress, examine collectively the aims and the learning objectives of the course, and how they apply in each section of the course and whether in the light of experience they require modification. By mutual support and exchange of view teachers will learn from each other and learn to modify their role. The key person in developing each team will be the course tutor and perhaps it is significant that one major task identified for the future by the ILEA Curriculum Development Project is:

"Active support for (or where necessary, encouragement for the establishment of) course teams in colleges and the involvement of course teams in the initiation and development of future curriculum innovation."

Section 9—People—Staffing Policy

The staffing policy of the ILEA which brought satisfaction to many teachers who would not otherwise have received promotion to Lecturer grade II and which elected members believed demonstrated the seriousness of their intent, was not without its responsible critics in the colleges.

A principal who had been a member of the original working party on the mergers and had consistently resisted not so much the improved staffing but the earmarking of certain posts with a local tag explained how when he first took up his present appointment "found a staff list which produced a list of names in each Department at each grade, and the building in which they were working, and a very brief two line job description. Attached to some of these was the simple designation "Appendix II post number 9", Appendix II post number 17", and so forth so these posts were quite clearly identified as being different from other posts of Lecturer grade II. . . . In the last couple of years I have quietly got rid of all that and I certainly take the pragmatic view that so long as there are at least 17 Lecturers grade II who are actively involved in work which I am happy to think of as Appendix II I am not particularly concerned to label them as individuals, and I am not particularly happy that they should feel labelled as individuals."

He expanded on the reasons why he took this line: "First it reduced the flexibility of staff, both for the staff and the college responsible for their deployment. It was made quite clear by the Inspectorate that if anybody in the future wanted to apply . . . (for an ear-marked Appendix II post) . . . their appointment would involve a commitment of 50% or more of their time by the individual concerned with Appendix II course or students. That meant that the sort of working-life development for a teacher, in which you did this certainly very demanding work for a period of 3–4 years and then withdrew from it for a time, or for good, was ruled out. You'd got your job for Appendix II work and your were stuck with it, unless you got another job. That could produce a situation in which the individual had outlasted his original commitment for that sort of work but was tied to it—like an ageing PE teacher."

An even more cynical view was that of a principal who alleged that some of his colleagues "in fact tried to take the goodies and not do any of the work. These colleges were stuck with the work from way back and they just saw it as an opportunity to promote a few good people and carry on."

The view of an authority and its Inspectors wishing to promote and protect an area of work and the teachers working in it is likely to diverge sharply from that of principals who are seeking ways of retaining flexibility of movement which allows them to respond rapidly to changes in the situation in what they judge to be the best interests of the college. To strike a just balance between these two sets of perceptions is difficult and requires not only men and women of principle but also sensitivity and understanding.

The establishment of a Senior Lecturer (Appendix II) working to one of the vice-principals in whose remit it is to oversee the work with the younger less able disadvantaged students did not meet the same opposition from the critical principal quoted above. On the contrary he quoted these posts as one positive good to come out of the reorganisation report and its Appendix II. How posts have been filled and how they have been developed in the colleges makes an interesting study.

At the beginning, colleges tended to use the posts in the way they found most convenient and in accordance with the dominant tradition—that is that the tradition which emerged from the process of the merger as the immediate norm. As other influences from the other college or colleges made themselves felt, or as pressure arising from new work, or from outside, from the Inspectorate or the authority's officers began to make its impact, roles became clearer and the varying patterns of appointment began to converge on to a new norm. In spite of the stereotype senior lecturer (Appendix II) conceived of as a person standing outside departments, supporting existing work at this level in all departments and introducing and inaugurating new courses, not every college adopted that pattern of appointment. Much depended on what had preceded, how much of this work existed already and how it was distributed throughout the college. In the larger colleges where often there was little tradition of this level of work except perhaps in one of the component colleges. The senior lecturer tended to be free-standing ie not attached to a department but working to the vice principal responsible for Appendix II developments. In other colleges, especially those that did not merge, or were not so large, and often had a greater proportion of low-level work, different positions arose. Again the pattern of authority and the nature of the role varied quite considerably according to the person appointed. Most of the senior lecturer appointments were free-standing working to the vice-principal, but not all. Some were based in departments and sometimes their work was largely restricted to that narrow frame. Others had a teaching commitment to a department but were free-standing for the rest of their time. In one college the senior lecturer was almost entirely concerned with one specific form of handicapped student; in another the post was used to underwrite a differently conceived appointment altogether, (that of student advisor) and the organisation and supervision of the Appendix II courses was undertaken by a small independent group of three (later four) senior lecturers drawn from different departments.

There was some discussion in some colleges as to whether senior lecturers should be concerned for the total Appendix II "population", no matter what Department they were in, or whether they were mainly concerned with courses, especially new-style Isledon type courses, which were then liable to be shunted off to a particular department.

One principal made a very interesting comment: "There has been an intense struggle for hearts and minds—mine for his, his for mine—since he was appointed and I have a great deal of respect and affection for him but he came from a college in which the craft courses made up the bulk of the college's work and the college had been told to add on general and commercial education (which meant GCE and shorthand typing). And then it was told to add on to the general and commercial education—Appendix II. So that his conception of Appendix II was courses and his view of the functioning of the senior lecturer (Appendix II) was effectively a mini-head of department running a set of courses. It has been a sad disappointment to him that my conception of a Senior Lecturer (Appendix II) has been of a pervasive presence acting, as it were, as the conscience of the college as a whole looking at all departments within it to see whether each one is actually looking after the younger, less-advanced and less-advantaged in the context in which it is operating."

Since the first round of appointments certain trends have begun to assert themselves. In one or two colleges where the need has become apparent additional Senior Lecturer appointments have been made. Where the role has been a vague coordinating role without any substance, the senior lecturer has tended to look for a particular hook to hang his interest upon and to retreat into a more restricted role, but in a number of colleges, the opposite has happened and the senior lecturers have envisaged an expanding role concerned with the curriculum development tasks within the college. One Senior Lecturer described her role in these terms: "Yes, they would say my job is senior lecturer Appendix II, but it is really Senior Lecturer (curriculum) with an overall coordination of Appendix II courses. The need for the wider brief is very important, particularly where there are senior lecturers in departments where the responsibility is towards particular courses." She explained how she conceived her way of operating:

"I think where it's useful is on the external side. When we are approached by somebody to put on a course or do something, it does not necessarily slot in automatically to a department and I think my role is that of someone who can then nurse that course and get it really established before placing it in a department. . . .

"That's the way I see the job plus trying to rationalise some of the ways we do things. We have got "social and life skills" being taught on five different courses, all under different names, all of them using the same sort of materials—there is a remarkable overlap between the material being used and we need to establish a measure of common practice."

A figure of some status with a coordinating and monitoring role and direct access to principal and vice-principal can ensure that decisions properly taken by authorities outside and inside the college are actually carried out.

It is interesting that the curriculum development role adumbrated by this senior lecturer is also appearing in the brief of other senior lecturers (Appendix II) in other colleges. A job description for such a post advertised recently contained the following:

"The post is not attached to any of the seven departments of the college, and the person appointed will monitor and make recommendations upon curriculum and course development throughout the college in order more adequately to meet the educational needs of all members of the community, particularly those not catered for by conventional academic or vocational courses. The post does not involve specific administrative or supervisory responsibilities; in addition to teaching responsibilities, the person appointed will work closely with the deputy principal in diagnosing educational needs and proposing appropriate educational responses.

"The college policy for Appendix II work as it is familiarly known without Inner London is continuing to develop. The college currently offers provision for communication and numeracy workshops at the two main sites, TSA, Preparatory and Vocational Preparation Courses in both general and business education departments, increasing concern and provision for the physically and mentally handicapped, special courses for girls and women to retrain for scence based occupations. Active preparation for involvement in the youth opportunities programme outlinded in the Holland report is under way."

The parallel developments took place in each college quite independently. A further interesting coincidence is that each college has decided to rename this area of work in the college "new opportunities" or "new education opportunities", to replace the increasingly irrelevant title "Appendix II".

There is also one other aspect of staffing of a very different kind which has been criticised and of which mention has already been made—the practice of teaming up a specialist teacher with a communications teacher which began on part-time vocational courses and has spread to some other areas. The use of the term "double staffing" to describe the practice—which is used by members of the Project—is disliked by the officers concerned with the flow of resources because they consider it misleading and it has aroused the active opposition of even potentially sympathetic principals. It also has misled some teachers. It is possible to justify the presence of two teachers in a communications workshop in which there may be up to 20–24 students—if they were in a science workshop or a laboratory this ratio would be tolerated. It is more difficult to accept two teachers sitting with 14 or less students in a two hour "Sociology and English" class.

Two other aspects of staffing policy need to be mentioned here. The first is that in the promotion of new curricular policy it is often difficult to persuade full-time staff to take part because unless there is a fair guarantee of success, it may represent a check to their normal promotion pattern. This is particularly true of curricular development in the area of low-level courses. If things go well, the low status attaching to the course may be offset by the aura of success and possible promotion; should a venture fail, however, that low status may seem to attach itself to the teachers concerned. The anxiety of teachers working in this area without a strongly-based commitment is the widespread, if largely unconscious and unspoken conviction, that low-level courses attract low-level teachers. If people are specially recruited for a course and made full-time and the course fails or it is withdrawn for any reason, the college or the Authority may be left with staff who are difficult to deploy elsewhere.

If one looks at the alternative the dilemma becomes clear at once. The extensive use of part-time staff on a course or a group of courses is tantamount to passing a vote of no confidence on these courses. It induces an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambiguity among the staff which rapidly transmits itself to the students.

It is therefore very much to the credit of the Authority that they have permitted a large recruitment of full-time staff to new ventures, and the conversion of hours for part-time staff into full-time staff appointments at a rate which is economic to the college even if more costly to the Authority and, unlike many other Authorities, it has allowed the funds it has received from the MSC/TSD to fund full-time appointments and not merely part-time staff.

Section 10—The Role of the Principal in Relation to Curriculum Development

The relationship between an organisation like the ILEA Curriculum Development Project and the individual principals is a matter of considerable significance. In determining the future of the project, the extent of its influence and the impact of its thinking on the total work of the colleges, it could well prove to be the key relationship.

Since the publication of Circular 7/70 recommending the universal establishment of academic boards in colleges, its progressive implementation has clarified and codified the role and function of principal. In spite of the fears and anxieties of many principals that their activities were being restricted and their power taken away it can be argued that more clearly defining the sources of their authority while their ability to engage in arbitary and (in the strict sense of the word) irresponsible action was curbed, their power to act was enhanced and their actions once undertaken less open to challenge. This is, perhaps, not the commonly-held view either of principals, Authorities, or the teacher unions, but as principals learn to perform their role in the new setting, this seems to be the pattern which is emerging. One principal wrote of the situation in his college: "There can be only two sources of authority within the college. One is that of the Education Authority, who fund the college and determine its general character and appoint the principal. Their authority is exercised nominally through the governing body, largely in practice through the officers of the education authority. This authority is vague and generalised and would be difficult to invoke on many matters of detail were that the only source of authority within the college. Thus an alternative source of authority and decision making, needs to exist, and this is represented by the academic board. The source of this authority is the staff and student body as a whole, collectively represented by the academic board of which the principal is the Chairman.

"Thus the principal is able to make decisions which he can expect to be carried out because he symbolises the point at which these two sources of authority converge, and in this college the principal has been at great pains to ensure that his decision and statements derive quite clearly from one or other of these two sources."[14]

If there are two sources of authority validating the principal's decisions, it is clear that there is an ever-present possibility of legitimate conflict and clear systems for reducing and, if necessary, resolving that conflict need to exist.

The governing body can play a valuable part in resolving any such conflicts as may arise. The fact that the principal is both agent of the Authority and Chairman of the board means that the long and tortuous arguments that have gone on about the status of the board decisions and whether they are "mandatory" or only "advice" largely misses the point. If the board favours a policy directly contrary to the Authority, it can always be over-ruled and wearing his other hat the principal can dissent from it. On the other hand if the Authority wishes to adopt a policy wholly obnoxious to the teachers—whatever the legal position may be—the policy is unworkable. Between these two extremes there is a great deal of room for manoeuvre.

The principal stands at the tangential point of two arcs of authority, one circling downwards from the local authority, the other circling up from the staff and students. He is also surrounded by pressures from without to which he can respond in a variety of ways. He can call upon the authority either of the academic board or the LEA to justify the stance he chooses to take. For a body like the Curriculum Development Project seeking to help forward one interpretation of the Authority's policy, the principal of the college can be a valuable ally or a dangerous opponent, a position which may in ILEA have been recognised formally, but is being fully understood only relatively slowly.

If an Authority wishes to promote any change in its colleges, not only curriculum change, the support of academic boards will be very helpful, but the support of the principal is essential. Where it is a matter of clearly-defined Authority policy, the great majority of principals, (like the great majority of local government officers, inspectors and advisors), even though the policy may be the one they personally deplore, will loyally carry it out, recognising the ultimate democratic source of local authority power. Decisions of the academic board will not deflect them or overrule their support. Where, however, it is a question of a specific interpretation of Authority policy, not necessarily backed by the Authority's clear fiat—and in issues of curriculum such a situation could hardly arise—a principal, anxious to retain harmony in his college, will need to tread lightly in his handling of an exploratory stage. Whether he takes a given proposal to the board, what he acutally takes and when he takes it are matters of considerable discretion.

One principal who would be regarded by most of his colleagues as progressive and to whom the development of the Appendix II programme owes a great deal discussed the situation in rather less formal terms:

"I would like to think that we have occupied a mid-way position on this. We retain enough flexibility and enough authoritarianism to be able to back some individual initiative. I think if you have got to refer everything to the board you are in trouble.

"And I think the board have got to accept this, that you do have to grab opportunities as they arise and you report afterwards. Quite a lot of things that we have done, even in recent years, like the Bridging Course we did not take to the board. I was asked on the telephone "Are you prepared to do this?', and I said "Yes". And I went back to the board and said that I had agreed to do it. I must say, in that respect, my action has never been queried and any decision to go for a bit of innovation always has been accepted.

"We have often gone to the board when we are quite well under way. For example, the latest Access course—we did not go to the board with some elaborate plan. We started talking to the University concerned long before we got to the academic board. It's absolutely essential. If you go to the board and you say "Look we might have a look at this", they um and ah and they say "What's it all about?" and they want to dot the i's and cross the t's and everyone jumps up and says "What are the implications for me?" and they all try to look three years ahead, and say "Oh that might be in" or "This bit of work must be there"—it's murder! So you really have to present them with faits accomplis, with "well look we have got to do this haven't we?" and as I say, I do not recollect any occasion when the board said we should not have done what we have done."

CHAPTER 9

The Relevance of ILEA's Experience

Section 1—Is ILEA Unique?

There may be a tendency in some quarters to dismiss all that has gone before in this text as one more manifestation of London's obsession with itself. It may be said that its problems are different, that the way the education of Inner London is administered is unique and therefore offers opportunities not available elsewhere. Its budget is so big anyway that detaching what would be a substantial sum in any other city's budget to cover the Appendix II exercise is mere chicken feed for London.

This kind of perception of the capital is partly because it is the capital; it is also Cobbett's Great Wen and sucks in resources that cannot then be used elsewhere in the country. It may have special disadvantages but they are complemented by special advantages. Some items are both advantages and disadvantages at the same time. For example its great size magnifies its problems—but also its income. Its size gives it more facilities that may be used as educational resources—monuments, museums, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, markets and so on, but their widespread character and the high cost of travel on public transport in the capital restricts possible use.

Some general problems would seem to be shared with other urban centres, such as the run down and emptying of the city centre, an outward movement of industry, and the flight of the middle classes to the suburbs or beyond. The emptying areas in the centre tend to get filled up by members of ethnic minorities, a concentration of different groups in different cities.

There has also been in most urban centres a progressive alienation of sectors of the school population from school and the institutions and values of the majority culture. This alienation is not confined to any one racial group and affects a sector of the white indigenous population as much as it does children from minority ethnic groups. Finally, the whole country is affected by a growing volume of youth unemployment and the portents suggest that unemployment may be more intractable for young people than for older folk. It is true that the overall London figures do not look as bad as those in other places, but if one looks inside those figures at the worst hit boroughs a quite different picture emerges that matches the national picture much more closely.

But in this broad sense it is also true that British cities reveal similarities to the cities of North America, and that on a very superficial view it seems they share some of the same problems. It would nevertheless be unwise to adopt uncritically "solutions" which have been devised to meet the special circumstances of those cities, even where it can be shown that these solutions have worked and the situation is better than it would have been without them. Even more to be deplored would be the selection of individual items from educational programmes and their application outside the original context of use. In their new context their meaning might be quite different from their original significance. Unless the host flesh of any cultural transplant is sympathetic, the transplant will be rejected, and the resultant state of health be worse than before.

The cultural divide between London and the rest of Britain is not so great as between, for example, Britain and the US, but it still exists. Nevertheless if we allow for both the similarities and differences, between the London scene and elsewhere in the country, is it possible that other major cities, at least, can learn from London's experience? The similarities, certainly the external similarities of inner urban decay and surburban sprawl may approximate closely, and it is probably reasonable to think that there are lessons to be learnt. But what about other areas, not major centres of population and not handling the budget of our big cities but who may still have numbers of young people, socially, culturally or economically disadvantaged? Have they too something to learn from the London experience? A cautious assent may be given if that experience is correctly analysed and understood and the essential nature and purpose of each section of the administration in promoting curriculum innovation is appreciated, and related to the context in which it functions. Not only the individual items, but the interactions and reactions need to be observed; not only the willed actions and the initial expositions, but the unconscious resistances, the misperceptions and misinterpretations that lie like shoals in the murkier reaches of the stream.

The experience of one authority cannot provide ready-made solutions for those of another. A moment's reflection reveals the truth of the general proposition. Our "solutions" would only be too easy if this were not true. Faced with rising unemployment among young people, after a quick visit to Coventry, all an Authority might need to do is send out the valuer to look at redundant fire stations.

The position is not dissimilar to that faced by students of comparative education viewing the experiences of other countries and learning to understand their own situation more clearly, rather than seeking out bits and pieces of foreign systems which they can employ in a purely ad hoc fashion.

"Few comparative educationists have claimed that cultural borrowing is viable since Sadler in England and Harris in the USA came to the conclusion that bits and pieces of a school system could not be taken over successfully from one country to another. Sadler wrote that each educational system had its own "living spirit" derived from the natural characteristics of the people who ran it and argued that if a system of education is to be successfully transplanted, the national ethos must also be taken over."[1]

In explaining his own position Brian Holmes further comments "I accept with some reservations Sadler's claims that school problems can only be understood in relation to other forms of social culture, that the educational question is largely an ethical question and that things 'outside the school matter even more than things inside the school and govern and interpret the things inside'."[2]

The context of the provision both physically and ideologically gives that provision its meaning. It may appear that the "living spirit" of Birmingham or Cleveland, for example, cannot be so very different from that of London and while a foreign observer will note differences, he is more likely to be aware of the extent of common ground between the English centres and is diverted from his own cultural assumptions. Nevertheless, the existence in England of a national education system *locally* administered recognises where it does not actively promote, the presence of local variants that will be the embodiment of a local "living spirit".

The ambience in which decisions will be taken and action envisaged will have many idiosyncratic features; not only local traditions and, possibly, a local industrial pattern, but the impact of personalities, a political pattern (long-standing dominance of one political tradition, for example, or a record of balanced "ins" and "outs") a history of relationships between the members and officers, between the authority and the teachers and, within the schools and colleges, a record of authoritarian or participative patterns of control.

Practical considerations also supervene and may themselves be expressions of the local "living spirit", the existence, size and scope of any advisory or inspectorial system, the nature and use made of any teachers' centres, the number and type of colleges of education an authority may control, the hitherto existing pattern of further education and the degree it may tilt towards technical or general education.

Brian Holmes has suggested that the relative failure of many educational panaceas has been not that the policies have been universally wrong but that in their application insufficient attention has been paid to their derivation and to the real conditions under which they have to be applied.

"We have had many educational panaceas and few outstanding successes over the past 30 years." (He lists some examples). . . . "It is not that I disagree with these policies, on the contrary. My point is they have been derived from norms not facts. In their comparative enquiries the empiricists have taken little account of the unique "living spirit" from which decisions may be derived and in the light of which the *appropriation* of an education policy should be judged. In the event, from not very carefully analysed problems, universal macro-solutions drawn from this kind of empirical search have met, as you might expect, with varied success in countries round the world."[3]

The recognition of a common problem that two or more educational systems share may be a starting point. The identification of its main features and then the evaluation of the relative size and significance of the alternative manifestations of these features may arise from a comparative study and a greater understanding of one's own problems. It may be that in the course of that study alternative "solutions" may come in for evaluation and, as a result, policies and practices that fit the local situation may become available, but they must be compatible with, if they do not actually arise from, the "living spirit" of the local system.

Thus the Inner London developments we have been looking at were rooted in what had preceded them. It would be tedious and not a little invidious to trace out the precise process by which ideas in an earlier curricular event were transposed and transmuted into a later phase of wider influence. One could actually identify the change agents, the individuals who as carriers of a mode of approach or a particular tradition moved from one college to another and brought with them the seeds of innovation. The broad pattern and traditions within which this happened have been indicated in this text.

Each Authority has its own history and its own tradition, as does each institution within it. That history and tradition if seen aright will contain possible elements that may furnish a solution to the problem which is the concern of this report, if that problem has been correctly perceived and analysed. The analytical process may be helped forward by an examination of the ILEA's attempts, drawing on its own peculiar tradition, to meet the challenge of disadvantaged youth.

For a major change to be produced in a traditional education pattern that will allow it to move rapidly to face a new and developing situation two conditions are necesary. These can be postulated from a study of the London experience, though it is too soon to say whether they are sufficient to ensure success. The first is that the Authority must be able to display a firm political will that continues to be maintained over a long period. A growing condition of that sustaining of will is likely to be an increased understanding of the wider implications and practical outcomes of its policy. The reality of the political will and its strength will be subject to a simple measure—the degree to which the policy is backed by resources. The way to dispose of platitudes is to place a cost tag on them.

The second condition for success must be a complementary initiative (or at least a strong indication of willingness to embark on an initiative) from a sufficiently substantial section of the teachers within the Authority's service.

Section 2—The Problem of Control

Even in those cases where a desire on the part of an education authority to achieve certain educational ends in its colleges is matched by willingness on the part of some teachers in those colleges to translate the policy into action, the initiatives of both may be brought to nought either by a failure of rapport between them or the thwarting activity of other groups whose existing activities and practices are threatened, or are thought to be threatened, by the policy and its implementation.

It is, as we have already seen, against normal good practice for an authority to place resources at the disposal of a college with too precise a tag upon them. Unless a major revolution in the organisation in colleges takes place much will remain at the discretion of the college principal and his supporting hierarchy. Practice will vary considerably between authority and authority but the very substantial measure of autonomy that the majority of further and higher education colleges and their principals enjoy considerably exceeds that of most head teachers of schools and finds no parallel in similar institutions in most countries of Europe. While from the point of view of the colleges this is seen as a good thing, and in a period of economic restraint may be looked on by their staffs as a bulwark, for an authority seeking to initiate change in any direction it creates problems.

An immediate though, hopefully, a passing problem is the confusion of interest likely to be attributed to any change of line. The more economically justified a change is, the more an authority is likely to be accused of operating in a Machiavellian fashion to bring about a cut. Any policy, however eduationally sound and beneficial to the students, that may in any way prove more economical or could be justified in terms of greater productivity, becomes immediately suspect. There is an equal and opposite danger that, in a contorted fashion, activities that are wasteful and involve the use of more staff than are really necessary become justified and held up for admiration. Hence the danger of using phrases like "double staffing" to describe the practices of harnessing technical and communications specialists in a common yoke. It is a practice which conducted in one way can be more costly: conducted in another it could actually lead to staffing savings.

It is insufficient for the Authority to pour in resources without making certain that they are deployed to meet the objectives for which they were intended.

If an authority decides to gather, promote and coordinate alternative curricular strategies to resolve the failures left by past unsatisfactory experiences of education, it will need to have recourse to delicate and precise systems of monitoring. As a member of the ILEA remarked about the Appendix II provision:

"If things go wrong, it's not lack of resources and not the lack of will."

Thus there is all the more need for a sensitive, but really effective, system of monitoring that ideally should be sufficiently accurate in its assessments and rapid in its reporting that it could stimulate or cut back the flow of resources, an instrument that can at one and the same time be discriminating and yet produce a powerful feedback. For the ILEA the possibilities clearly lie in a development of its present system of an inspectorate with advisory teachers, though it is an instrument yet to be perfected.

Where an authority has no extended inspectoral or advisory staff on the London pattern, it may have to devise a division of labour between a member of its staff who does have an advisory role in some degree to further education and perhaps a college of education (technical) or an education department of a polytechnic. There would be some hurdles to be overcome because neither of these latter bodies would wish to be a part of any system of control, any more than the ILEA's advisory teachers regard themselves as such. The aspect of control must remain with the Authority's officers and the inspectorate or advisers can express a view. The function of the advisory teachers and any surrogates in the form of college personnel are there to help teachers organise their resources, design syllabuses and curricula and produce materials, but it will be the colleges own curricula and the teachers own material that will be being shaped. The effect of the intervention of the college of education, like that of advisory teachers, will not be to dictate to the teachers or the colleges, though clearly they will have a position to maintain. They cannot operate in a vacuum. But like the advisory teachers they would work on a collaborative basis to help the teachers achieve their own chosen ends. This is precisely the mode of operation that the ILEA curriculum project favours teachers adopting with their own students in the normal work of the colleges.

Is this a feasible alternative to the current ILEA pattern? A vice principal from a college of education had this to say:

"On the one hand some people look up to this college because we are distant and neutral; on the other hand, because we are distant and neutral, people are saying we don't know anything about the real difficulties of teaching the disadvantaged and I imagine the ILEA advisory teachers have met much the same sort of problem. I'm not sure what the way through it would be—a relationship which maintains our neutrality—which I think is a worthwhile asset—but somehow overcomes that very important hurdle of distance. In other words, if any individual member of a college of education's staff wants to get involved in this work it is clearly not enough simply to sit at his desk here and organise courses for people to come to here.

"I think once he's established his neutrality by being on the college of education staff he does have a real need to get involved in the day-to-day activities of other further education teachers, preferably at an institution and that implies, I suspect, some type of secondment on a continuing basis, two days a week or something of that order, or it involves a positive commitment to get out and do things."

This line of thinking contains a recipe for success that would allow other authorities, quite differently placed from the ILEA, with different backgrounds and traditions and without the resources or the facilities of a substantial inspectorate to initiate support for those young people in the 16–19 age-range that need further education but are themselves at present unable to define their needs except in negative terms.

The condition of success for any such a venture is a certain measure of humility—a willingness to learn alongside the student backed by the Authority's political will, expressed in a readiness to pay.

Section 3—"The Future cannot transmit Appropriate Signals to the Present"

The naive criticism of Appendix II (and the ILEA Curriculum Project's attempt to find viable ways of transmuting aspirations into reality) ignores what is actually being done and attacks its own Aunt Sallies. The more sophisticated form is to dismiss the achievements of those who take advantage of the programmes on offer on the grounds that even in its most expanded forms it is essentially a set of opportunities for individuals, it does not open a path for the majority to acquire knowledge framed in those ways that enables the possessors access to power and authority. When they tire of these two lines, critics may turn to the attack on "work"—especially as a motivating goal for education—and associated with it, the Protestant ethic.

The first type of critique is based on ignorance. The other two can be argued effectively in general terms, but the Appendix II activities do not necessarily contribute a "pro" or a "con" in the discussion. Once again it is the context within which the activities function that gives them meaning and alternative contexts can expand or frustrate what Appendix II begins.

The attack on "work" may be premature. "Get your card before the employer gets his chips" reads a recruiting advert published by a trade union. It is relying on a widely spread belief and fear that the so-called chip revolution is just round the corner and that either massive unemployment or a rich life of leisured culture awaits us. There is probably more than a modicum of truth in these visions but the timescale is likely to be longer than the popular imagination has it, development is likely to be very uneven, affecting some sectors of industry and commerce much more rapidly than others, its rate depending in any case on the general levels of success of our industrial effort and the rate of investment. And finally, while there is a long-term structural strand running through our current pattern of unemployment, its present levels and the present depression have far more to do with the classical movement of the trade cycle than the sudden arrival of micro-chips to transform our society.

To say this is not to deny the possibility that in the future technology may make life easier for all of us. At the 1979 meeting of the British Association Professor Tom Stonier estimated that by early in the next century 10% of the labour force would be able to supply the whole community with all its material needs but note the cautious phrasing of the newspaper report "would be able" indicates a possibility; it is not a prophecy. And "material needs" are not the only needs of a community nor the only needs met by human labour.[4]

While the structural changes may work more evenly and more slowly than popular descriptions in the media would have us believe, they are already beginning to have a noticeable effect. The OECD report "Entry of young People into working life" mentions that:

"In a few European countries there is a disturbing trend which echoes an earlier finding for the United States. It appears that after each recovery, from a cyclical downturn since the mid 1960s, the youth share of unemployment has settled at a somewhat higher level than in the previous recovery. . . . If this same trend is established in European countries, it will not be possible to assume that an economic recovery will restore the *status quo ante* for youth. It may mean that youth unemployment which develops during recessions is perpetuated by structural trends."[5]

The report does not conclude that the correct conclusion to be drawn is to welcome the increased leisure that is obtained for young people as a good thing and expand their education to meet its opportunities, or to abandon the vocational or prevocational goals in existing educational provision. The report urges the contrary and draws attention to the measures member countries are taking to ensure better preparation for work within the school system, to expand training facilities at work, to ensure closer cooperation between education and industry is the expanded provision, and to secure what is calls "the organisation of innovative transition periods between school and working life." En passant it all also comments:

"During the current recession, in some countries there are still vacancies at all levels of skills, and employers complain about manpower shortages".[6]

In Britain some of these shortages exist in very traditional types of employment as yet unaffected by chip technology.

The report also comments on the changing attitudes of young people towards work and their unwillingness to submit to conditions of employment which do not match either their aspirations or their perception of what a good job should be. Although the attitudes of young people are often criticised, the report indicates they are far from being wholly negative.

"This second balance sheet" (ie of young people's attitudes towards work) "is more positive in the last analysis. It suggests that the attitudes of young people which are so much criticised are formed by the kind of jobs and salaries offered them and the fact that they feel unable to display their real talents. To some extent the behaviour of young people highlights some of the unattractive features of contemporary working life which adults find less and less acceptable."[7]

Again the resolution of the difficulty is not by means of the move away from work, the still further separation of education and industry or the subordination of education to industry in order to produce a compliant work force, but through a greater understanding of industry's needs by education and correspondingly a greater understanding of the *nature of work itself*, an awareness of the needs of young individuals and an acceptance by industry of their responsibility for meeting those needs. Flexible and continuing systems of training and education in which there is an industrial as well as a college component will be part of it, as well as "innovative transition periods between school and working life."

It is therefore sad when part of this truth is perceived and then dismissed with a demand for "education for life" or "education for leisure". An outreach worker for the ILEA'S career service working largely with young truants and other people normally difficult to contact, correctly pinpoints something truants lose through their truanting: "What's very sad is that some of the young truants clearly have great difficulty in getting jobs or keeping jobs and it's to do with the fact that school is partly a process of going out to work. It is a routine; it's a 9–4 routine with lessons, lunch and breaks, and any young person who has that routine broken may find it very difficult to adapt back when they 'leave'."

This is the realistic understanding of the strength of one element in the "hidden curriculum" in schools which a number of the Appendix II programmes have taken over and made explicit. Part of their effectiveness has been due to the firmness with which a contract is negotiated between student and tutor and the relatively tough way it has been monitored. If the student really wants a job, and wants this course, preparing for work, he will meet the conditions laid down. If he does not want them, his failure to meet those conditions will be made plain to him and he will draw the necessary conclusions and leave the course. The number of withdrawals is relatively few—amazingly few in view of the previous history of many candidates—and a crucial piece of learning will be the behavioural adaptation that the youth worker noticed his clients lacked.

He went on, however, to comment: "I think we really do have to take responsibility. I think there is an educational responsibility. The jobs are no longer there and education—I mean formal education—has to take up some sort of stand on whether education is training people for work or for life. And I think for the last few years it's been saying it's for work. Nowadays teachers are almost indoctrinating kids, now aged 11 or 12 saying 'Work hard and you'll get a job; work hard and you will succeed.' But I think that is no longer true. It's been felt by the young people who were going to become teachers, it's going to be felt by the young people who are going to become social workers, and felt by the young people who might have gone into the civil service. We here are being told all the time about offers being withdrawn. The—"(he named a prestigious public corporation)"—have just told 100 young people they're not going to be taken on and they've gone so far as to give them 3 months' pay because they offered them jobs, so they've been made redundant before they've actually started the job. And these are very highly qualified young people who, because the jobs aren't going to be there, are going to have to look for something else."

There is a major non sequitur in this argument. It is most doubtful whether the 100 young people disappointed over the loss of their first job offer remained unemployed for very long. And while the potential teachers, social workers and civil servants may be cheated of their early job aspirations, does this really mean that the solution is to abandon any attempt to link school with vocation, but rather to life? Or is that another false dichotomy?

The logic is surely to make the education of young people relate more realistically to the world they are joining and in a broader sense prepare them for what they will find in it and the variety of work they will encounter. A higher element of vocational preparation both at school and in low-level further education might be helpful. In fulfilling this aim ILEA's experience with the "bridging" course and with other vocational models is a useful pointer. The concept of developing generic skills being explored in the longer pilot introduction to work courses and monitored by T E Townsend and M Freshwater may throw up evidence and eventually usable models.[8] If this is what "education for life" means, then the objections to the use of that phrase may fall. If it is an alternative formulation of the concept of "education for leisure" that surfaces whenever the system loses its way and begins to grope for realistic education objectives for the mass of its young people, it will be untenable. This is not the place to consider in detail the dangers of splitting off the concepts of work and leisure and, because leisure is the more desirable state, providing educational programmes to help young people to use it to the greatest profit. Leisure does not really exist without work. Work is what makes leisure economically and socially possible. Unemployment is not leisure and under-employment with large boring gaps of inactivity does not provide or promote leisure.

A danger looms of some educationists falling into the trap of those adult tutors who, finding it difficult to adapt to the new perspectives of the '40s and '50s, looked back nostalgically to the '30s and the wonderfully rewarding work they did with the unemployed.

There is something highly suspect in an education which offers all the liberal and humane values to a social group apparently deprived of them but which at the same time removes or makes difficult the means of obtaining economic resources sufficient to enable the recipient to engage in activities that reflect those values. That was the early promise of the secondary modern school, which it found itself unable to sustain because of the demand of industry for certification.

The Appendix II provision may—and has been—attacked on precisely the same grounds, that of offering something inferior to low-achievers, dressed up as superior to what is on offer on higher status courses. In any college, or any department of a college with particular courses, this may even be true. But, if we look at the Appendix II provision as a whole and the thinking of the advisory teachers from the Curriculum Development Project and that of many of the tutors in the colleges, the argument cannot be sustained. It is not an alternative in the sense that it teaches the same thing better, or arrives at the same immediate goals more easily than the standard courses which offer academic qualifications. It is an alternative because it is different in kind, not a diluted version of an established pattern. It uses different methods and it looks towards different immediate goals.

The importance of the special access elements in the provisions lie here. If Appendix II consists of a series of culs de sac, then it will stand condemned; its potential value will soon be discounted; students will abandon its courses. If it grows into a viable alternative route or set of alternative routes through work, through a combination of training and education, through continued education, through access to higher education, some of its approaches and thinking may find their way into the established pattern and existing corpus.

There is a little evidence—an olive leaf, if you will, or a cloud no bigger than a man's hand—to suggest that the work experience schemes—both those incorporated into the educational programme for schools and colleges and the MSC scheme of Work Experience on Employers Premises (WEEP)—may be winning back some of the placements formerly obtained by adolescents and now lost to older workers and may even help to create jobs by allowing employers to see what young people might do that is not being done at present.

A senior lecturer in one college reported on an experience she had at a careers meeting organised by the local careers advisory service:

"I was at an employers' forum recently organised in the borough and the personnel managers and various other people from large enterprises were there. One of them said they no longer advertised their jobs; they take on people that come on work experience courses and they're not worried about the exam results. They take the youngsters at face value according to how they actually perform in the office."

Where this is a device to attempt to fill jobs which otherwise remain unfilled because of the unsatisfactory nature of the job it is unlikely to prove of much use to an employer. As a senior careers officer said:

"I can't see any reason why that should work. I think the reason why some firms think it's going to work is because they believe that we" (ie the careers advisory service) "have some element of compulsion upon people, to fill their grotty jobs. And in fact we haven't, so they don't get anybody at all. If a job is grotty, they don't get anybody either from WEEP or by normal recruitment. And indeed why should they? . . .

"But as far as recruitment is concerned, first of all there are young people who could do, or could be got into a position where they could do, a certain kind of job but who are not acceptable to an employer for one reason or another and WEEP can be very useful for them both in showing the employer that the initial impressions are not necessarily correct—for example, a person might be particularly shy in an interview—and also to give the young person confidence, and I have certainly used WEEP for that purpose successfully. . . ."

But in addition to his personal experience, there seemed to be some substantial evidence building up to suggest that firms were using WEEP for recruitment. "In some cases this would mean jobs, which might not otherwise exist have become available, because whether you introduce automation, or indeed whether you have jobs done at all, is a cost question. If you can get the training done for nothing, you might now consider employing someone. But also, in addition, there are people using the scheme for recruitment. There are firms who commonly took one or two young people a year. Now they don't; they have YOP places instead. I am not sure that this is such a bad thing. Well, in fact, I think it's a positive thing."

It is a relatively small step from accepting the use of work experience on employers' premises to begin to conceive of a more carefully planned framework of induction, education and training which would be incorporating much of the kind of thinking developed within ILEA's curriculum development project, produce a pattern of recruitment to industry that could itself be a continuation of education, be of greater value than the existing arrangements to many employers and young people alike, open up a new avenue of personal progress and in the long term be far less wasteful of national assets than present arrangements.

The present period is a testing time for all associated with the education and training of 16–19 year-olds because of the great uncertainty about the real nature of the phenomena we observe. Professor Stonier in the speech at the British Asociation referred to above said:

"The future cannot transmit the appropriate signals to the present."[9]

For this reason it is difficult to plan with absolute confidence the kind of education and training appropriate for those young people who will still be living and working in the next century. If there were an already existing framework and some kind of provision it would be capable of adaptation, expansion, transformation, into whatever was necessary. Early in this century, those one-time collaborators but later opponents, Michael Sadler and Robert Morant shared a vision of a continuing education for the young adolescent (though on the crucial issues raised in this report they stood on opposite sides) and advocated government action. Opportunities were lost after 1918 and 1944, and again after the publication of the Henniker Heaton report. The unified vocational preparation programme (UVP) is still a tender plant. The ILEA's initiative does show what some of the elements of a more comprehensive programme might reasonably be. If no framework covering the whole age-group of 16–19s exists or only barely exists, it may become a Herculean task to mould a new system rapidly into an appropriate pattern to meet the conditions futurologists are always forecasting.

It may well be a safe gamble to back the view that whatever the future may be it is likely to be different from most of the forecasts experts make. The social and political variables are too many and too uncertain.

At the British Association meeting Lord Ashby said:

"Until governments understand these issues it is dangerous to encourage rapid advances in technology where they may lead to uncontrollable social unheavals. It is a moral problem. Affluent nations know only too well what they can do with the resources of nature, they are confused about what they ought to do."[10]

This uncertainty may seem also to justify taking no very rapid steps in encouraging advances in education, especially for those young people in the 16–19 age-group at low levels of attainment.

On the other hand such reliable evidence as we have would suggest that, in spite of the uncertainty, to assist these young people on the first stage of their transition to autonomous adult status and to facilitate their access to continued training and education is a cost we can no longer safely postpone.

A Postscript

An explanation as to how another metropolitan LEA sees the issues and solutions which arise within and from the ILEA Appendix II project must necessarily commence with a disclaimer. The views expressed are those of an individual officer. They are not necessarily shared either by colleagues or by the Sheffield City Council.

The text of this report goes to press in a period of considerable uncertainty. In the dying days of 1980 the Macfarlane Committee's report is with the printer, the Government has recently issued a White Paper on *Special Educational Needs* and is receiving responses to two consultative documents—*Examinations 16–18*, and *Continuing Education*—and a new training initiative is expected from the Manpower Services Commission. The planned throughput of the Youth Opportunities Programme has recently been doubled, and the latest forecasts from the Department of Employment and the MSC anticipate that between 415[illegible]0 and 490,000 young people under the age of 18 will be unemployed by the first quarter of 1982. The implications of the new 'block grant' method of funding the rate support grant remain obscure except in as much as they appear to operate against local discretion which would require expenditure greater than centrally determined norms. What is more certain is that the numbers of 16–19 year olds will decline during the 1980's, albeit with varying speed and intensity in different parts of the country, and that redeployable capacity within the education service will tend to become available in schools rather than in colleges of further education. Demographic trends, the development of opportunities for the 'new sixth' in secondary schools, the dispensation under which part-time courses for the young unemployed may be provided in schools and the unified system of provision proposed in *Examinations 16–18* will mean that for many Authorities, at least in the short and medium term, the experience of the Appendix II project may illuminate *the complete range of their post 16 provision* and not merely that made under further education regulations.

Some of the uncertainties rehearsed above carry with them individual potentials for emphasising tensions within the education service rather than uniting it to provide a comprehensive range of educational and training opportunities for adults and young people of post compulsory school age. Macfarlane may be read more for what it may say about institutional forms than about the curriculum. *Examinations 16–18* has exposed sectoral aspirations for control of the assessment of a potentially significant chunk of the post-16 curriculum. At a time when demographic change and government policy threatens to reduce the volume of advanced work *Continuing Education* may sharpen the interest of higher education institutions in non-advanced work, while the sheer scale of youth unemployment may press the MSC back into a pre-occupation with throughput at the very moment when it has become more obviously concerned with the quality of the experiences it is providing. Under the present circumstances it is therefore relatively easy to espouse the view that LEAs should make available an appropriate and comprehensive range of educational opportunities. The challenge during the next decade will be to make that aim a reality in a period which in the short and medium term may be marked by limited resources, considerable unemployment, industrial restructuring and its consequences for further education, the re-organisation of schools and colleges and powerful threats to the morale of the teaching force.

A range of provision which falls within the ILEA Appendix II category has developed in Sheffield during the past few years. Most of it is unique to further education: some of it is provided by schools in collaboration with colleges. It includes lower level CGLI and BEC courses, '21 hour' courses for the young unemployed, alternative routes to higher education at the Sheffield City Polytechnic, provision for groups of students with special education needs, and provision under the Unified Vocational Preparation, Youth Opportunities and Training Opportunities Programmes. The context within which these developments have taken place is inevitably different from that which influences developments in the ILEA. Nor indeed are they similar to those which appertain in most county authorities and many metropolitan districts. In many senses Sheffield is an amalgam of villages; but it enjoys an urban compactness (apart from its Stockbridge promontory in the north), easy communications and a singleminded corporate identity born of a common purpose in the manufacture of steel. In common with the Appendix II project the city and the Authority place a considerable importance upon communications and consultation. There are, for example, regular meetings between the Principals and Vice-Principals of colleges and officers, and between secondary school heads. All FE courses of more than 40 hours duration require the support of the Further Education Location of Courses Panel before they are submitted for committee approval, while TEC and BEC curriculum developments are steered and monitored by the Sheffield Council for Technician Education. FE courses publicity and in-service teacher training are both guided by working parties, and there are regular meetings between officers and representatives of the teachers' associations. Much of the work of these groups is not directly related to provision for the Appendix II constituency, but they are relevant and important in that they provide a network of formal and informal communication and relationships and all that may flow from such a network in the way of mutual understandings about philosophy, priorities, objectives, ways and means, shared experience of successes and problems, and, sometimes, an enhanced tolerance of views not shared. This communication network is firmly tapped into a monthly committee cycle and frequent meetings between sub-committee chairmen and officers which leave little room to doubt the aims and priorities of elected members of the party which, but for brief periods in 1932/3 and 1968/9, has provided a continuity of purpose since 1924.

It would be a mistake to suppose therefore that developments have been explicitly Authority led in the sense of interventionist policy. A general awareness and consensus on the issues has been suffficient to stimulate institution based responses to identified needs supported by not ungenerous staffing arrangements. In recent years there have been increases in full-time teaching establishments in order to reduce the volume of part-time work, to meet increased demand consequent upon demographic trends, to respond to Circular 10/77, to contribute to the development of collaborative provision made between colleges and schools, and to convert a substantial proportion of part-time full cost course teaching to full-time posts. Colleges have of their own volition involved Senior Lecturers and LII's in Appendix II type work, but for the academic year 1981/82 the Authority is seeking to allocate additional Senior Lecturer posts to the colleges of further education to develop and further expand provision under the Unified Vocational Preparation programme and for the young unemployed. It is not envisaged, however, that these posts will carry a specific label with them, and it will be for individual colleges to determine how best they may be deployed.

The possibility and desirability of the establishment of an informal curriculum development unit to enhance the development of provision for the less able has for some time been the subject of intermittent, informal and as yet inconclusive discussion. It is envisaged that such an initiative would be supported by the Sheffield City Polytechnic and place an emphasis on providing opportunities for experienced practitioners within the colleges and schools to identify and disseminate best practice in terms of materials, teaching strategies, methods of assessment and reporting. The Authority could be expected to adopt an enabling monitoring role as distinct from an overtly controlling function in much the same way as it is currently evaluating the introduction of school based CGLI Foundation and BEC General courses.

Within the regional context the city and its institutions have benefited from their involvement with a lively Regional Advisory Council, which has made a major contribution to curriculum development through its TRADEC (Trade Education) courses. These anticipated the provision which has been stimulated by the Unified Vocational Preparation programme and have subsequently been incorporated within the pilot programme.

Turning to the second of the four concepts which underpin the thinking behind the Appendix II project it is fair to say that there is some concern regarding the role of work within this type of provision. Although there is a wide acceptance of the value of a vocational orientation as a motivator there is by no means a consensus on the issue of vocational content within full-time courses as a possible end-of-course destination. Careers officers are notably sensitive to the frustrations which may be felt by young people who may complete a course which carries a vocational label, and yet subsequently find that there are no appropriate employment oportunities available or that the course does not of itself qualify them to enter directly a chosen employment field. Such experiences point to the need for the closest collaboration between providing institutions, the Careers Services, employers and the MSC, and the inclusion of substantial counselling elements during both the early phases and the main body of provision, particularly in the case of full time courses. A second concern rests with the role of "education for leisure" in this context. Those directly involved with young people in the colleges appear to be sceptical of the validity of such an element in a course directed at the Appendix II constituency. On the other hand it seems probably that in the forseeable future considerable numbers of young people wil have substantial periods of free time thrust upon them. The Authority has made its recreational facilities available to the young unemployed free of charge, and there is a body of opinion which takes the view that these young people, and those who may participate in a proposed scheme of work-sharing would be better able to make the most of both formal and informal ways of occupying free time if access to them were facilitated by the acquisition of the relevant understanding and skills. It is the exclusivity of the work context which is questioned. A final concern related to work resides in the problem of the organisation and availability of work experience. At the present time there are barely sufficient opportunities for work experience on employers premises to meet existing demands on the Youth Opportunities Programme. At the same time the demand for short term work experience for pre 16 pupils in schools and post 16 students in schools and colleges is increasing. Pressure of demand may well threaten the quality of placements, and there is a danger that unco-ordinated approaches to employers by diverse interests may prejudice established goodwill. The provision of work experience for school pupils is currently co-ordinated by a seconded teacher, but the overall issue is the subject of continuing discussion within the Education Department. What is certain is that if work in the shape of a real job or a close approximation is a vital ingredient of provision for the Appendix II student, its availability cannot be taken for granted and that which is available will have to be husbanded with care.

The emphasis of the ILEA project on the autonomy of the learner and provision which may not have fixed starting or exit points, clearly has enormous implications for initial and in-service teacher training. The notion of the *negotiated* curriculum is not unfamiliar in Sheffield, but in general it is part of the stock in trade of neither teachers in schools, (although they must provide for potential Appendix II students up to the age of 16,) nor of lecturers in the colleges of further education. Roll-on, roll-off or 'bus stop' Social and Life Skills provision developed for groups of students of wide ranging ability under the Youth Opportunities Programme has given an impetus to the development of learning packages and emphasised the role of the teacher as a manager and negotiator of individual and group learning experiences. The paradox for an Authority in the immediate future is not that inherent in the proposal that a young person with very modest achievements after 11 years of schooling should now be able to become responsible for his own learning, but how to establish the required volume of Appendix II type work and at the same time sustain and develop the overall quality of provision. A review of the totality of current provision, the form in which it is made and the role of new technology may well be necessary if the necessary teaching expertise is to be made available in sufficient quantity. That is not to suggest that some existing provision should be reduced as a matter of priority. But we might, for example, reconsider the volume of teacher contact within full time courses in the interests of the development of autonomy and study skills, and explore the potential of distance and computer assisted learning systems in order to free teachers to provide expertise and assistance which cannot be provided in other ways.

The remit of the research embodied in this report was "prepare a description of low-level further Education in ILEA. . .". The description of the task itself reinforce the values of a system of grading of work which tends to ignore both the needs of students and the pedagogic skills required of these who endeavour to meet them. It begs the question as to whether Authorities should enhance the status of work by the allocation of additional senior posts, or whether they would not do better to agree with interested parties a method of generating a teacher career structure and of managing the provision of educational opportunities which is neutral in the value placed upon different kinds of provision. If 'the only reality is subjective reality' we could do no better than begin by affirming that meeting the needs of the would-be shop assistant is of no less importance than meeting those of the would-be welder.

Ultimately the solutions to the problems of content, form and process of provision for the Appendix II constituency do not lie solely with those who endeavour to make it. The report has illuminated the role of labels, teacher expectations of pupils, teacher-student relationships, cultural barriers, pupil-confidence (and by implication the morale-sapping effect of normative referenced assessment methods?) in shaping the perceptions and performance of young people. If part of the challenge of Appendix II provision is to overcome the problems of alienation and confidence then their resolution must be seen partly in terms of the development of appropriate post-16 provision and partly in terms of the development of forms of pre-16 learning which provide a more positive experience for the potential Appendix II population. Nor can solutions be seen in purely educational terms. An appropriate educational strategy must be complemented by policies directed at ameliorating and resolving the social and environmental problems which create or accentuate disadvantage and under performance in all its forms, and be illuminated by a greater sensitivy towards the needs of adolescents in a society which promises to delay even further the entry of young people into adult society. The removal of the 16–19 age group from the full-time labour market may have several justifications, and there is a growing body of opinion which would favour such a development. But if that is the road down which we are to travel there are implications not only for the curriculum and for teaching and assessment methods, but also for the status according to young people. Within certain sections of the community, to be a student carries status and promise. That is not true for a substantial proportion of the community. The issue therefore, is not only about whether and how local authorities and their institutions should give status, professional respectability and resources to

Appendix II type provision, but about developing a status for young people, (whether they be in work or in education or in both) which has a dignity and credibililty in the eyes of the peer group, parents, potential employers and with the trade unions.

Thirty-two years ago in their foreword to the Authority's scheme of further education and plan for county colleges under Section 42(1) and 43(2) of the Education Act 1944, the Chief Education Officer and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Education Committee of the day wrote "It is a bold plan, and it will be relatively costly to implement, but if it is faced the City of Sheffield will have, in conjunction with the Primary and Secondary Education Development Plan already approved, comprehensive educational facilities to meet the different needs of all enthusiastic citizens, and it is hoped to encourage others to avail themselves of so vast an opportunity". In the context within which we respond to a decade of experience within ILEA it serves as a reminder that although much may be achieved locally by men and women with a clear sense of purpose able to deploy even limited resources towards the achievement of common goals, we participate in a national education system locally administered, and that the way forward may be halting unless there is a national as well as a local will to develop and provide an effective and comprehensive education and training system.

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